OP

EDMUND GIBSON, BISHOP OF LONDON 1669–1748

Norman Sykes

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EDMUND GIBSON

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BISHOP OF LONDON
1669–1748

A Study in Politics & Religion in the Eighteenth Century

By

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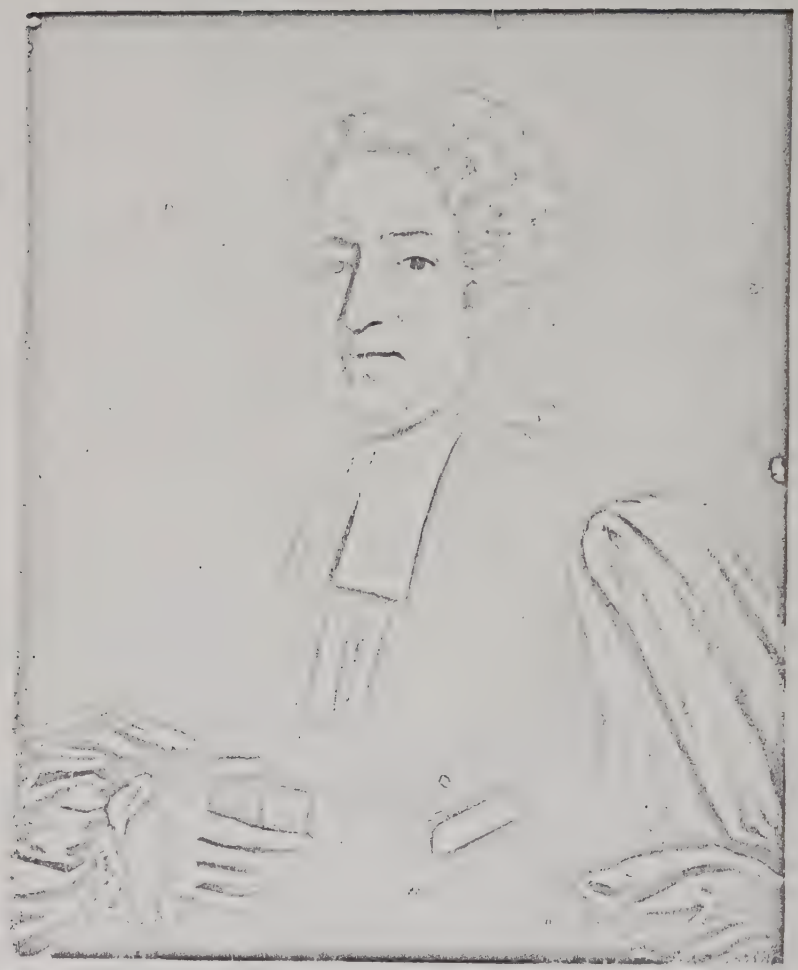

EDMUND GIBSON

BISHOP OF LONDON 1723–48

From the portrait in the Bodleian Library presented to the University by John Gutch in 1795. Painter unknown

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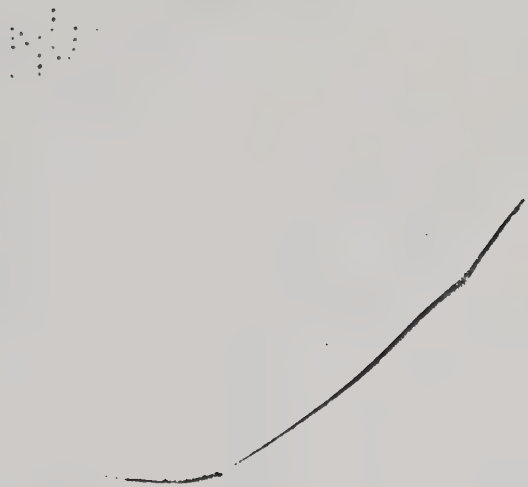

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INTRODUCTION

THE following pages had their origin in a suggestion made to me by the Rev. H. D. A. Major, D.D., Principal of Ripon Hall, Oxford, in 1920 that I should make a study of the life of Edmund Gibson (1669–1748), Bishop of London, in connexion with certain manuscripts in the possession of Major-General J. C. Dalton, R.A., of The Hutts, Grewelthorpe, Ripon, to which I was promised complete freedom of access. At the time little was known of the extent of these manuscripts or of their importance, but as the study proceeded I became aware of the magnitude of the task, and of the difficulty of the subject, so that several years have passed before I can now discharge my obligation of gratitude to Dr. Major and to General Dalton by presenting this volume.

I trust that no word of apology is needed for this choice of subject. For not only has Gibson been the subject of no biography, but this study, it is hoped, will demonstrate that the long line of ecclesiastical statesmen in England, which stretches from the times of St. Dunstan, was not broken by the execution of Laud, but continued into the days of the Hanoverians; and that even in the neglected eighteenth century there could be found a Prelate, energetic and reforming, who was at the same time an active partner in the affairs of State, and who has left an abiding memorial of himself in the study of Modern History in the Universities. The importance of Gibson, as this biography is concerned to insist, was not primarily as a bishop of the Church, but rather in his efforts to bind the clergy by ties of material interest to the cause of the Hanoverian dynasty, and to create a Church-Whig alliance to replace the tradition of loyalty to the Stuart line which had involved the Church in difficulties when James II was expelled from England. From this point of view it has been necessary to emphasize the critical situation revealed rather than created by the exile of Atterbury for high treason; and to show that the policy of Gibson, called to share the confidence of Townshend and

Walpole at this juncture, was governed entirely by this problem of the urgent necessity of reconciling the clergy to the new dynasty. From this conviction arose his reforming schemes: the institution of Whitehall Preachers, and the foundation of Regius Professorships of Modern History and Languages at Oxford and Cambridge, both projects intended to win the affection of the learned Corporations for the House of Hanover; and the proposal to bestow all benefices in the gift of the Crown upon the clergy resident in the diocese to which the particular livings belonged, a parallel measure designed to gain the support of the parochial incumbents. These specific schemes were only practical illustrations of Gibson's wider policy of creating a strong Whig interest on the Bench, and therefore in the House of Lords, and of raising the Whig party into the position of defenders of the Church against the Tories who would betray it into the hands of the Papist Pretender. The story of the breakdown of this alliance as a result of the interference of Queen Caroline and the Court party, and the hostility of the lay Whigs towards the Church shown in the attacks made upon the clergy in the House of Commons, forms a large part of the central portion of the book. It may be affirmed that the evidence adduced to illustrate this policy of Gibson will throw considerable new light on the administration of Walpole, and will lead to a re-valuation of the opinion usually accepted in regard to Queen Caroline's influence upon ecclesiastical preferments. In addition to this participation in affairs of State, Gibson was brought into close relations with all the important movements of intellectual and religious life in the first half of the eighteenth century. He was a determined opponent of the Latitudinarian clergy, and his antipathy prevented that party from attaining a position of influence on the Bench, which it would otherwise have secured through the favour of the Queen. He was involved in relations with the Dissenters, whose claims for greater liberty he also opposed, with the Wesley brothers and Whitefield, and with the Moravian Brethren, whose activities in England form an interesting chapter in the history of the period. As Bishop of London also, Gibson had the care of

the churches in the Plantations, and was involved in many negotiations in this regard, so that his episcopate is of importance in understanding the state of the American colonies. At home, Gibson was brought into intimate relations with the Societies for the Reformation of Manners, with the Charity School movement and with the other works of the S.P.C.K., as well as with the S.P.G. Finally, in his younger days he had been a distinguished scholar, had played an important part in the Convocation Controversy, and his name is still remembered by his *Codex*. It is therefore just to claim for him that his importance both as an ecclesiastical statesman and as a bishop justifies a careful study of his life.

In attempting a work of such proportions one must inevitably receive help from a number of persons whom it is impossible to mention by name in any list of benefactors. I hope that all who have been so kind as to allow me to ask questions of them, or have helped me in various ways, will accept my thanks. I can only express my indebtedness to a few persons who have given me especial help. My sincere thanks are due to Professor A. J. Grant, of Leeds University, who not only first taught me the meaning of historical studies, but has given ungrudgingly of his time and advice throughout the period of my work. Without his friendship and encouragement this book would never have been brought to birth. I owe him no merely conventional debt of gratitude. To the University of Leeds I am also grateful for nominating me as the first Hastings Senior Scholar to The Queen's College, Oxford, and for the grant of a University Scholarship, which made possible my residence and work in Oxford.

In researching for materials for the subject I have received invaluable help on many occasions from Sir C. H. Firth, late Regius Professor of Modern History in the University of Oxford, who has placed at my service his unrivalled knowledge, and has allowed me often to trespass upon his time and patience in asking questions and stating difficulties. His advice and criticism at every stage have been most helpful, and he has also read through my typescript before it was submitted to the Press and has made many suggestions for improvement.

I am greatly indebted to him for his repeated kindness and interest. I am grateful also to Canon E. W. Watson, Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Oxford, who has given me much assistance and consented to act as supervisor of my studies in Oxford.

To the Provost and Fellows of Queen's College, I owe much for their continued interest in this study throughout its progress, and for their liberal contribution towards the cost of publication. I am especially indebted to Dr. J. R. Magrath, the Provost, for his help in looking up particulars of Gibson's days at the College, and for his generous undertaking to defray the cost of reproducing the photograph of Gibson which appears as the frontispiece; and to R. H. Hodgkin, Esq., Fellow of Queen's College, for his encouragement and help. The work and cost of preparation have been lightened by the generous interest of the College. The Committee for Advanced Studies at Oxford have also made a liberal grant towards the cost of publication.

My thanks are due to Professor Claude Jenkins, of King's College, London, for his help in directing my search for sources in London, to Miss E. Jeffries Davis, of University College, London, who introduced me to the Institute of Historical Research; and to the Very Rev. the Dean of Winchester, who kindly read my manuscript and made suggestions for improvement.

Throughout the work I have been greatly helped in many ways by General J. C. Dalton, R.A. He has allowed me full access to his share of the Gibson MSS., has answered queries on various genealogical points relating to the Gibson family, has provided the pedigree and the facsimile of Gibson's handwriting, and has assisted in the work and cost of publication. By his offices I have been granted access to the manuscripts of C. J. Hill, Esq., of St. Andrews, who placed his share of the papers at my disposal, to those belonging to the Rev. C. Gregson, of Bournemouth, and to the papers of the late Mrs. Charles Dalton, who lent the manuscripts belonging to her late husband, Charles Dalton, Esq., through whose efforts the Gibson MSS. were discovered and recovered. To these several persons I wish

to express my thanks for their help of various kinds; but especially to General Dalton, who has done much to facilitate my work.

I am grateful also to the Bishop of Oxford, who recommended the book to the Delegates of the Clarendon Press; and to the readers and officers of the Press for their help in seeing it through the press.

I am indebted to my friend and colleague, Miss B. Farrow, M.A. of King's College, for her kind assistance in proof-reading and in compiling the index; and to the Revs. J. C. Hardwick and C. Jenkinson for help in revising the manuscript.

In conclusion I would express the hope that the Provost and Fellows of Queen's College will regard it as a not inappropriate circumstance that this exercise should have formed part of the studies of a Scholar on the Lady Elizabeth Hastings Foundation during three happy years' residence in that Society, since it was through the influence of Gibson with her ladyship that her benefactions to education were directed to the service of that College of which he was himself a member and a generous benefactor.

N. S.

KING'S COLLEGE, LONDON.
Easter, 1926.

SUMMARY OF AUTHORITIES

In the register of the parish of Bampton an enthusiastic contemporary of Bishop Gibson wrote that 'his fame travelled the same course with the sun and his sound was gone out into all lands wherever Christianity had any footing'.[1] It is remarkable that one so eminent and well known in his own age should have been the subject of no competent biography during the hundred and seventy years which have succeeded his death. As a consequence the task of the student who seeks to compose a biography of him now is beset by many difficulties. He has to deal with a mass of floating tradition, the exact details of which are difficult to ascertain and to verify.

Hitherto the two chief sources of information have been a booklet of twenty quarto pages, published in 1749, *Some Account of the Rt. Rev. Dr. Edmund Gibson, Late Lord Bishop of London*, and the article in the *Biographia Britannica* (vol. vi, part II, Supplement). The former, ascribed to Dr. Richard Smalbroke, Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, is a brief review of Gibson's main activities, from the pen of a personal friend. It deals chiefly with his publications, especially the *Codex*, and gives a brief sketch of his political relations with the Administration; but it contains little in the shape of informative detail. The article in the *Biographia Britannica* adds several items of information concerning his private life and is the more valuable memoir. That in the *Dictionary of National Biography* adds little new material and is seriously in error in two points; it gives the date of Gibson's translation to London as 1720, instead of 1723; and it describes his wife as the sister (instead of the sister-in-law) of Dr. John Bettesworth, Dean of the Arches. Apart from these the most valuable sources of contemporary information are Lord Hervey's *Memoirs of the Reign of George II* (2 vols.), Mrs. Thomson's *Memoirs of Viscountess Sundon* (2 vols.), Whiston's *Memoirs*, and Pyle's *Memoirs of a Royal Chaplain*. Here again, though it is possible to reconstruct the general outline of Gibson's career and policy, detailed information is lacking.

[1] Noble, M. E., *A History of the Parish of Bampton* (1901), p. 160.

Undoubtedly the most valuable and informative authorities consulted by the present writer are the various manuscript collections which are designated in the text *Gibson MSS.* These consist of the few surviving volumes of a collection of papers left by the Bishop himself and originally of large proportions. Upon the death of the Rev. Edmund Gibson, grandson of the Bishop and Rector of Bishop's Stortford, in 1798, these documents disappeared and were not re-discovered until 1889, when they were accidentally brought to the notice of the late Dr. Sparrow Simpson, then Sub-Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, and by him purchased for the library of the Dean and Chapter. There they remained until 1896, when they were claimed by the Bishop's descendants, Mr. C. J. Hill, Captain Ernest Poore, and Colonel (now Major-General) J. C. Dalton. The claimants having established their right, the greater part of the volumes were divided amongst the three parties and the rest allowed to remain in St. Paul's library. At the outset the collection consisted of about ninety volumes in quarto or folio, the majority of which, however, were commonplace books, collections made by the Bishop for the *Codex*, extracts from the Registers of Convocation, &c. Several of these, including the Returns to Articles of Inquiry in order to Visitations of the dioceses of both Lincoln and London, are still deposited in the Library. But the most valuable and interesting papers comprised a series of twelve bound volumes of the Bishop's letters and private memoranda. These were divided as follows: Mr. C. J. Hill took volumes 3, 4, 9, 12. Captain Poore 2, 5, 8, 11. Colonel J. C. Dalton, 1, 6, 7, 10. In addition there were several loose papers, unbound and consisting of separate papers. Unfortunately Captain Poore's collection has entirely disappeared, and all efforts, both by public advertisement and private inquiry, have failed to discover any clue as to its whereabouts. Of the two remaining portions, volume 9 (of Mr. Hill) has been lost. By the kindness of General Dalton and Mr. Hill I have been allowed access to all the rest. The importance of their contents will be evident when it is stated that they include such items as: Gibson's Proposal to establish Whitehall Preachers; his scheme for the Foundation of Regius Professorships of Modern History and Languages in the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge; selections from his Correspondence with the Ministers of State, and the leading Members of the Bench; his letters on the affair of Dr. Rundle's nomination to the see of Gloucester. The

study of these documents has laid the foundations for this memoir of the Bishop, and it is a matter of great regret that the collection should be thus mutilated and incomplete.

The Public Record Office contains a valuable body of letters among the State Papers (Domestic) from 1723–48. The State Papers (Domestic) for the reigns of Georges I and II are not yet calendared and the documents themselves are gathered into bundles containing about one hundred items each and arranged approximately according to their dates. I searched about one hundred and fifty of these bundles, which yielded a good quantity of material. In several cases the papers furnished confirmatory evidence of the accuracy of the documents in the Gibson MSS., e. g. in the cases of the Bishop's scheme for the Foundation of Professorships of Modern History and Languages, and his project to regulate Promotions by Dioceses; in others additional items were discovered, supplementing the information contained in the Gibson MSS., e. g. a series of letters illustrating the actual negotiations between Townshend and Gibson concerning the foundation of the abovementioned professorships. In many cases the letters in the State Papers dealt with matters unrepresented in other collections.

The Additional MSS. of the British Museum also afforded a considerable quantity of material. To the Newcastle Correspondence belong most of the letters illustrating Gibson's political activities in the last decade of his life (1737–48); several of his letters are preserved in the Correspondence of the first Lord Hardwicke; and a large number in the Correspondence of Dr. Philip Morant, one of his clergy, with whom he discussed problems concerning the pastoral oversight of his diocese. In the Egerton MSS. is to be found the only extant copy of his first Charge to the clergy of the diocese of Lincoln, dealing with the Trinitarian and Bangorian controversies, and other letters are included in the Lansdowne MSS., Bishop Kennet's Collections.

In the Bodleian Library, the Ballard MSS. and Tanner MSS. have preserved a number of valuable letters from Gibson to Dr. Charlett, Master of University College, and to the well-known antiquary, Mr. Thomas Tanner, afterwards Bishop of St. Asaph, which are indispensable for the study of his early years, and which continue as far as the period of his Lincoln episcopate. The Wake MSS. at Christ Church have also afforded several items of additional information.

The efforts which I have made to secure access to the archives of the diocese of London have not been successful. Bishop Gibson in his Will directed that 'his successor should have the inspection and use of his diocese books, but these after that to be returned . . . All other written books and papers which related to the diocese, the Church of St. Paul's, or the Plantations to be put into his hands in order to be kept by him as bishop for the time being'. At the present time the diocesan archives are lodged partly at Fulham Palace, and partly in the crypt of St. Paul's Cathedral under the authority of the Bishop of London's Registrar. By the kindness and courtesy of the Bishop, I was allowed full liberty to search the papers relating to the Plantations, which are deposited in the Muniment Room at Fulham Palace. These comprise about two thousand letters written from the Colonies to the Bishops of London and they have been repeatedly consulted by American historians, more especially by Bishop W. S. Perry for his *Historical Collections*, and by Dr. A. L. Cross for his book, *The Anglican Episcopate and the American Colonies* (Harvard, 1902). I worked through the letters referring to the episcopate of Gibson. Upon inquiring as to the whereabouts of the diocesan papers mentioned in Gibson's Will, the answer was made that no information was available in regard to them. Similar difficulties confronted my application to the Bishop of London's Registrar for permission to consult the records in the crypt of St. Paul's. The obstacles were threefold: (1) The records are neither arranged in an orderly manner, nor catalogued, and the Bishop's officers could not furnish any information as to the existence of any records of Gibson's episcopate. (2) There are no facilities in the Registrar's office for searching records. (3) A prohibitive fee is imposed. Under these circumstances it was impossible to attain any result.

On the other hand I was granted full liberty to inspect the remaining volumes of the Gibson MSS. which are preserved in the library of the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's. The most important items are the returns to the Visitational Articles of Inquiry which relate to the dioceses both of Lincoln and of London. At Lincoln also I was allowed access to Gibson's Register for the period of his episcopate (1716–23).

By the courtesy of the Librarian of Sion College I was permitted to consult (1) the Register of the College, (2) the collection of 'Bishop Gibson Pamphlets' bequeathed to the library. The latter

comprise about fifty volumes of contemporary pamphlets collected by Gibson himself and form an invaluable body of material. Together with the Prints and Satires in the British Museum, they are indispensable to the study of political and ecclesiastical history in the eighteenth century.

In addition to the above sources there are, of course, the books, sermons, charges, and tracts written by Gibson himself, of which a large and representative selection are extant in the library of The Queen's College, Oxford, the Bodleian Library, and the British Museum.

The two volumes of *Lord Egmont's Diary* lately published by the Historical MSS. Commission (vols. ii and iii) did not come into my hands until this book was in the Press. It has not been possible therefore to add references to the Egmont MSS. in the text. But I have given extracts from the *Diary*, illustrating the relations of Gibson with Walpole and the opposition of Gibson to Dr. Rundle, in an appendix (F) at the end of the book. The references to Gibson in the Egmont MSS. do not call for any revision of the view here taken of his policy, and I hope it will be not inconvenient for readers to refer to the Appendix F.

A collection of the most important MS. documents hitherto unpublished is given in the Appendix to the essay.

I

EARLY LIFE

'THE fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge.' Of few epochs in the history of the Church of England is this proverb truer than of the period which stretches from the Revolution of 1688 to the accession of George III. It is a period which has been, generally, little appreciated and less understood by ecclesiastical historians.

'Three generations have seen it with the eyes of the men of the Oxford movement, which was itself a phase of the romantic movement of the early nineteenth century. Now the eighteenth century was not romantic, and was just at that distance from the Oxford divines, at which men's forerunners show most to disadvantage. And those divines, like each successive ecclesiastical school, satisfied their self-esteem and pushed their cause by depreciating their predecessors.'[1]

The eighteenth century can only be understood, however, by looking at it from the standpoint of the seventeenth, which was its historical progenitor. The problems with which it had to grapple and the weapons with which its warfare was waged were both bequeathed to it by its predecessor. From this point of view it becomes immediately clear why the Georgian era has always been the unhappy 'Cinderella of the centuries'.[2] It opened with the promise of a rich achievement and closed with the feeling of profound disillusionment. The seventeenth century had been the heroic age of the English Church Militant, which, in the defeat of the conspiracy of James II, seemed finally to have

> Triumphed and outbraved the shocks
> Of Popish Shipwreck and Fanatic Rocks,[3]

[1] E. W. Watson, *The Church of England*, p. 180, London, 1914.
[2] W. H. Fitchett, *Wesley and his Century*, p. 3.
[3] 'A Poem on the Parliament', by G. Waldron, in which the Church is apostrophized as Eusebia, London, 1728: Bp. Gibson Pamphlets, 45, A. 6, No. 12, Sion College.

so that it remained only to guide the vessel into the harbour of calm. But instead of the victorious progress of the Church Triumphant, came the startling spectacle of the conflict with the Deists, in which Christianity was plunged into a life-and-death struggle with an enemy more formidable than Puritan or Papist, one whose assault threatened to undermine the very foundations of revelation itself. The legacy of the seventeenth century was not peace, but a sword.

The severe exhaustion which prevailed both in Church and State, however, greatly impaired their fitness to sustain this new battle. In England, as on the Continent, the Reformation had produced a century and a half of almost ceaseless conflict. The Church had been powerfully affected in turn by the Civil War, the Commonwealth, the Restoration, and the short but sharp contest with James II. Abroad, the first half of the seventeenth century had been marked by the devastating Thirty Years' War in Germany, and the last portion by the preparations for the mighty struggle of the anti-Gallic coalition with Louis XIV, which convulsed the entire continent for nearly thirty years. These continued upheavals had bred in England a generation of fiery religious and military passions, with an attendant disregard for the restraints of intellectual discipline, or of moral conventions. There was a universal exhaustion and need of peace, and it was the lot of the eighteenth century to provide that respite and to reap the harvest of licentiousness and moral degeneracy, which had long been ripening. This dark side of its history has contributed largely to the stigma which the Georgian era has borne, but after the violent tempests which had preceded it, a time of inertia and moral laxity was inevitable. Moreover, the final expulsion of the Stuarts had presented the Church with the difficult problem of readjusting its theories of absolute monarchy with the practical fact of a king who ruled by parliamentary election. No less revolutionary to the Church of the Clarendon Code was the quiet passage of the Toleration Act, which gave legal recognition and protection to Protestant Dissenters.

In face of these perplexing problems the Church of England

needed the wisdom and zeal of all the ablest of its clergy. But it had the misfortune to emerge into the new epoch deprived of the services of some of its most valuable members. The stringent enforcement of the Act of Uniformity had resulted, in 1662, in the ejection of a strong body of its Puritan divines, whose stern moral principles would have been a valuable corrective to the immorality and cynicism of later times. The substitution of William of Orange for James II led to the withdrawal from its ministry of the Non-Jurors, a small but gifted and influential company which included one archbishop and five of the seven bishops who had resisted the exiled king. The defection of both these groups constituted a grave blow to the efficiency of the Church. Nor was the evil confined to those who had seceded. The majority of the clergy who remained were ill-prepared to adjust their absolutist theories to the new fact of a parliamentary monarchy. They still retained the prejudices resulting from their excessive laudation of the principles of Divine Right, Passive Obedience, and Non-Resistance. From the Revolution to the end of Walpole's administration they continued secretly to cherish Jacobite sympathies, and to hold aloof from the new dynasty and government. A turbulent and intolerant temper was displayed in the rancorous Convocation disputes and in the renewed persecution of Dissenters. The lower clergy wrecked William III's favourite scheme for a Comprehension, and though they could not prevent the passing of the Toleration Act, they were far from being converted to the principle which it expressed. The abuse which Dr. Sacheverell heaped upon Nonconformists was completely in harmony with their sentiments, and was the prelude to the insidious attempt of the Occasional Conformity and Schism Acts to stamp out Dissent as an organized corporation. Similarly the Convocation controversy bore the character less of a struggle for the constitutional rights of the ecclesiastical parliament than of a malicious determination on the part of the Tory presbyters to vex and harass their Whig and Latitudinarian superiors. This deplorable record of clerical activities during the reign of Queen Anne gave an excellent pretext to all the enemies of the clergy to

inveigh against them as a reckless, irresponsible, and fanatical class.[1] The Church of the eighteenth century entered upon its difficult heritage in 1689, not only weakened by a serious loss in personnel, but thwarted and impeded by the persistence of a spirit of restless and passionate bigotry.

Yet it was at this juncture that it was called upon to face the most important religious movement since the Reformation, the attempt to emancipate the human reason from the fetters of external authority, both of Church and Scripture. Reason had been more completely freed in the sixteenth century than the Protestant Reformers were, or could be, aware of. The stern conflict with the Catholic Reaction, in which the energies of Protestantism had been absorbed in the struggle to maintain its existence, had left no leisure for the examination of deeper questions. The seventeenth century bequeathed the most profound problem, unsolved, to its successor. In the long controversy with the Deists, the English Church was compelled to institute a searching inquiry into the very foundations upon which revelation was based. This was the chief task of the eighteenth century and the accomplishment of it is its distinguishing merit. Not only was Christianity vindicated against the champions of natural religion, but the Latitudinarian movement was established within the Church. The consideration of the Deistic controversy illustrates the chief characteristics of the Georgian era. It was an age of rationalism and common sense. The appeal to supernatural authority had been already rejected by the critical reason, and the appeal to the Spirit had been discredited by the excesses of the Commonwealth times. The ablest divines were now occupied with proving the truth of Christianity upon evidential grounds. The religious sentiment of the period found expression in works of practical piety; in the educative enterprise of the S.P.C.K., both in the foundation of Charity Schools and the dissemination of moral and religious tracts; in the attempts

[1] Gibson reckoned among the ill consequences of the Convocation disputes, 'a jealousie and coldness between the bishops and many of their clergy; and a handle to the enemies of both to represent them as men of turbulent spirits, and not fit to be trusted together in a public assembly'. 'Some Thoughts Concerning the Convocation,' p. 12, MSS. 117.

of the Societies for the Reformation of Manners to make men virtuous by enforcing Acts of Parliament; and in the establishment of hospitals and corporations for charitable relief.[1] The moral licentiousness and the disregard for authority, which were characteristic of the eighteenth century, had resulted from the breakdown of the old order and the confusion into which religious life had been plunged for more than a century; and if the efforts of divines to stem the tide of immorality and irreligion by demonstrations of the rational basis of Christianity and appeals to the enlightened common sense and prudence of their hearers did not produce a miraculous improvement, they were none the less an indispensable preliminary to the reconstruction of belief, without which the Evangelical Revival, which commenced towards the end of the reign of George II, could not have effected its regenerative work. The Georgian period, viewed from this standpoint, can claim a generous measure of praise for the good which it accomplished, and a more equitable degree of censure for the failings which were to no small extent the result of its peculiar situation.

THE career of Bishop Gibson may be said to be fully contemporary with the events of the period outlined above. Born in 1669, he had just completed his undergraduate course and had almost attained his majority when the Revolution of 1688 occurred, and before his death in 1748 the Protestant Succession and the House of Hanover were firmly established, the Deist controversy had spent its strength, and the Methodist revival had already signalized the commencement of a new era in the religious history of Great Britain. During the half-century of his active career, moreover, he was one of the foremost Churchmen of the age, and from his elevation

[1] Gibson saw in 1730 'many clear and comfortable testimonies of a true Spirit of Christianity in the Nation. Our churches well filled, our Sacraments well attended, and our charity schools well supported; subscriptions towards the augmentation of poor livings, contributions to the maintenance of Widows and Orphans of the clergy, and the liberality of well-disposed Christians towards the Propagation of the Gospel in foreign parts; all of them very numerous and each supporting these several pious designs with great success.' 'Charge', 1730–1, p. 22. This is the more notable as occurring in a Charge devoted to the consideration of Deism, the predominant tone of which is far from optimistic.

to the episcopate in 1716 to his death, was the most influential prelate in the Church.

Edmund Gibson was born at High Knipe in the parish of Bampton and the county of Westmoreland, being the younger son of Edmund Gibson by Jane, his first wife, the daughter of John and Eleanor Langhorn of Hilton-end in the parish of Askham.[1] The family of Gibson had resided in Bampton in all probability since the reign of Henry VIII. 'There are many deeds of the Elizabethan period showing the sales and purchases of land by the Gibsons,' and the inference that they were people of substance is supported by the evidence of the dimensions, and of the number of windows in the house where the future bishop was born.[2] Nor had the family been without distinguished sons. Dr. Thomas Gibson (1647–1722), uncle of the prelate, rose to a position of eminence in the medical world and married a daughter of Richard Cromwell, the Protector. Young Edmund was baptized on the 16th December 1669,[3] and the parish register takes note of a providential escape from death in his infancy by the falling of a beam upon his cradle.[4] He was educated at Bampton Grammar School, one of those 'good grammar schools' of the county which Bishop Watson of Llandaff averred were to be found at that time 'almost under every crag',[5] and his early lessons were given by Mr. Thomas Jackson, who was master there for forty-four years and was remembered because of the succession of distinguished pupils who had passed through his hands.[6] In 1686 'this miracle' (as Gibson is termed in the Bampton register) was sent up to Queen's College, Oxford, where he was entered as Batler on August 4th, and matriculated on October 29th.[7] He himself states that during his college days he was 'servitor'

[1] Noble, M. E., *A History of the Parish of Bampton*, p. 160, Kendal, 1901, from which source most of the details of Gibson's early life are taken.

[2] Ibid., p. 160.

[3] Baptismal Certificate of Edmund Gibson, 16 December 1669, Gibson MSS. vii. 3.

[4] Noble, op. cit., p. 160.

[5] Quoted in G. Atkinson, *The Worthies of Westmoreland*, London, 1849, vol. i, p. 142.

[6] Noble, op. cit., p. 160.

[7] The dates of Gibson's entrance and matriculation at Oxford have been copied from the College Register by the Rev. the Provost of Queen's College.

to the Provost,[1] an office which may be safely identified with that of 'famulus praepositi', mentioned in the Founder's statutes.[2] Among his fellow undergraduates at this period the most distinguished name is that of the poet Addison, who entered as a Commoner on the 18th May 1687. Gibson's student years were passed at a time of great excitement in Oxford. It is not difficult to imagine the enthusiasms and passions aroused by the attack of James II. The Papist king had determined to concentrate his assault upon the Church of England on the University where its position was strongest. Accordingly he appointed a Romanist Dean of Christ Church, and dispensed the Master and Fellows of University College from all obligation to attend or perform the services of the Book of Common Prayer. An uproar was created in University College chapel when a boy stole in to the celebration of Mass 'with a cat under his coat, which he, sometimes pinching and at other times pulling by the tail, made her make such an untuneable noise that it put them to some disorder'. The boy escaped, and when an attempt was made to arrest some persons who had assisted his escape 'two scholars of Queen's College' interfered to prevent the capture.[3] Then came the more famous attack upon Magdalen College. 'The Papists have already got Christ Church and University College,' said the famous Hough; 'the present struggle is for Magdalen and

[1] Gibson to Charlett, 23 Jan. 1702/3, refers to 'Mr. Provost of Queen's, when I was his Servitor'. Ballard MSS. vi. 48.

[2] The following note on the office of 'Famulus Praepositi' is communicated by the kindness of Dr. J. R. Magrath, Provost of Queen's College: 'Under Eglesfield's Statutes (Q. C. i. 30) the Provost was allowed to have a "famulus", or "clericus", to whose maintenance he was to contribute. There is no provision in the Statutes for what we call "scouts"; the "famuli" of the Fellows mentioned on p. 15 of the Statutes (Q. C. 31, *n.* 1) are put between "socius" and "amicus", and probably are of a different social order. The "famulus praepositi" is mentioned in many of the early long rolls under the Provostships of Hotham, Whitefield, and Carlyle. The name of one Robertus Lowell is given in Carlyle's time. The payments made to him or on his behalf appear not in the sums paid to "servientes", but in the "custos forinsecorum" as they arise when he accompanies the Provost on journeys on college business. "Famuli" were sometimes similarly provided for chaplains or fellows journeying on College business. On 16 Aug. 1830 the office of "famulus" was dispensed with and the emoluments (£20) divided between the two Bible clerks.'

[3] Clarke, *Life of Anthony à Wood*, Oxf. Hist. Soc., vol. iii, pp. 274–5.

they threaten that in a short time they will have all the rest.' The heroic resistance of the Fellows of Magdalen, the presence of the King himself in Oxford to overawe the opposition, and the coercive measures employed to intrude Romanist Fellows and President into the college were incidents which would remain indelibly stamped on the memory of eyewitnesses. Gibson's undergraduate days were passed amid such scenes of excitement and interest.

Hardly less fervent than the devotion of Oxford to the Church was its loyalty to the Crown, and even in the days of persecution it clung to its doctrines of Passive Obedience and Divine Right. Accordingly, when the crisis of the Revolution came and oaths of allegiance to William III were required, a great revulsion of feeling swept over the University. Jacobitism found its firmest stronghold there and the Non-Juror cause claimed a large number of supporters. For a time young Edmund Gibson was in danger of being carried away by the passion of undiscriminating legitimism. He was elected Pauper puer, or Taberdar, by his college on the 17th July 1690,[1] that is, a B.A. on the Foundation, but was prevented from taking his degree by scruples concerning the oaths until nearly a year later. In view of the pressure of his friends, he determined to examine the question for himself, and after satisfying his own conscience ' by comparing the writings on both sides that William and Mary were King and Queen ' de jure ', as well as ' de facto ',[2] the period of suspense was over and he proceeded B.A. on the 25th June 1691.[3] His independence of spirit and sobriety of judgement had saved him from an unfruitful secession, but the Non-Jurors could never forgive his desertion.[4] Happily the political excitements of the times had not

[1] The date of his election as Taberdar is taken from the College Registers by the courtesy of the Rev. the Provost.

[2] *The Weekly Miscellany*, Saturday, 23 April 1734: this paper was a staunch champion and defender of Gibson against his enemies; and the refutation here given of the slander that Gibson had once been a militant Jacobite demonstrates the use made of the incident by his opponents so long after its occurrence as 1734.

[3] Queen's College Registers, copied by the Provost.

[4] Hearne, *Collections*, vii. 280, 20 Sept. 1721: ' Though Dr. Edm. Gibson bishop of Lincoln be at present a great Whig and sticks at nothing, yet at

distracted him from the pursuit of his studies, and under the tutorship of Mr. William Lancaster, Fellow and afterwards Provost of the College, he showed both aptitude and diligence in his work. In addition to the customary classical exercises, he developed a considerable interest in Anglo-Saxon studies, coming under the influence of the learned Dr. Mill, Principal of St. Edmund Hall. The first fruits of his study of the northern languages was the publication in 1691, whilst he was yet an undergraduate, of an edition of W. Drummond's *Polemo-Middinia: Carmen Macaronicum*, and James V's *Cantilena Rustica*, with an introductory preface on Macaronic verse, and topographical notes by the editor. The work itself is quite unimportant, since the burlesque of Drummond on the pitched battle between two villages, and the ballad of gaiety and dancing ascribed to the Scottish king are of little value in themselves; but the prefatory dissertation shows Gibson's familiarity with classical authors, and his notes are evidence of a considerable knowledge of Anglo-Saxon and Gothic. On the whole it may be agreed that 'this short sally on a witty subject was very excusable in the first part of his life',[1] as a prelude to a more serious application to the Northern Languages.

In devoting himself to this branch of study, Gibson was in harmony with a prevalent tendency both in the University and in his own college. Although Cambridge had the honour

the Revolution he declined the oaths and continued so for years, till such time as preferment lay in his way and then he deserted all good principles and became an advocate for rebellion, &c.' Hearne also asserted that Archbishop Wake had been 'of non-juring principles' at first until 'secular interests afterwards strangely biassed him, as it did Gibson, the present bishop of London, who . . . stood out some time and said he would on no account take the new oaths. But this Gibson is a strange whiffler.' Ibid., viii. 287, 28 Oct. 1724. The accusation of Jacobitism was levelled at Gibson throughout his career; cf. *Dr. Codex's Fifth Pastoral*, London, 1734:

> Lay Fools by common morals live,
> But Grace is our prerogative,
> This reconciles fierce Opposites
> And ev'n regenerates Jacobites.

Cf. *The Progress of a Divine*, R. Savage, i. 141–4, London, 1735.

[1] *Some Account of the Rt. Rev. Dr. Edmund Gibson, Late Lord Bishop of London*, London, 1749, ascribed to Richard Smalbroke, bp. of Lichfield and Coventry, p. 2. Thoresby considers Gibson's notes to be 'very accurate and learned', *Diary*, vol. ii, p. 343.

of being first in the field in the encouragement of Anglo-Saxon studies, Oxford soon made up the leeway in the latter half of the seventeenth century through the zeal and industry of Francis Junius, Thomas Marshall, and George Hickes successively. When Hickes left the University in 1678 to become chaplain to the Duke of Lauderdale and in 1683 Dean of Worcester, 'Queen's became the head-quarters of Anglo-Saxon studies instead of Lincoln'.[1] A former Provost of Queen's, Gerard Langbaine the elder (1609–58), had projected the publication of an edition of the *Saxon Chronicle*, but had been forestalled by Abraham Wheloc, Professor of Arabic at Cambridge. With the removal of Hickes, however, Queen's took up the traditions of his work.

'The first endowment of the subject in Oxford was a collegiate lectureship and the first public teacher William Nicolson, a Fellow of Queen's. . . . Henceforth Queen's is "a nest of Saxonists". Nicolson, who became in 1702 Bishop of Carlisle, did not hold his lectureship more than a year or two, but the work was carried on by his pupils and successors. Edmund Gibson completed what Nicolson, at the suggestion of Junius, had projected, a new edition of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, published in 1692.'[2]

In this work Gibson was encouraged and assisted by Dr. Mill, to whose supervision Hearne ungraciously attributes the fact that it was 'better y^{n} any of his other performances'.[3] The basis of his edition was, of course, that of Wheloc, to whom he paid the just tribute of being the man who 'primus omnium praeclarum istud hujus nationis monumentum a blattis ac tineis vindicavit', and over whom he had the great advantage of using Hickes' *Anglo-Saxon Grammar*, as well as of the private assistance which he derived from that learned divine. 'The consequence was that his edition was a great advance on Wheloc's and altogether an admirable work. His Latin version is in general not only correct, but happy. Substantially, it has been the basis of all later versions.'[4] For materials he

[1] C. H. Firth, *The School of English Language and Literature*, p. 8, Oxford, 1909.
[2] Firth, op. cit., p. 8.
[3] Hearne, *Collections*, i, p. 217, 3 April 1706.
[4] C. Plummer, *Two of the Saxon Chronicles*, Oxford, 1892, vol. ii, p. cxxix, 124.

did not go beyond the walls of the Bodleian, and therefore knew nothing of the manuscripts C and D representing the Abingdon and the Worcester versions of the *Chronicle*. His fundamental error was his uncritical treatment of the *Chronicle* 'as if it were a single homogeneous work, the product of a single mind'.[1] Accordingly he conflated his manuscripts, attempting to weld all their materials into a continuous text, without any critical investigation of their respective value. But this was a task which was hardly understood, and not undertaken until the publication of Earle's edition in 1865. Gibson 'unfortunately for his countrymen had shut up in an elegant Latin translation, what a literal English one would have made infinitely more intelligible',[2] so that the first translation into modern English, based on his Latin version, was published in 1819 by Miss Gurney. In 1823 appeared Ingram's edition, which made use of the manuscripts C and D, and was in many ways a great advance on Gibson, and it remained for Earle, half a century later, to make 'the first attempt to give a rational and connected account of the growth of the *Chronicle* and the relations of the different MSS.'.[3] Nevertheless, Gibson's edition, considering that it was 'the effect of young brains and some spare hours stolen from the exercises of his college',[4] was certainly 'a most remarkable performance'.[5] For many years the author cherished the hope of making 'the *Saxon Chronicle* a complete work, by additions which might be had from other manuscripts, and by reducing every piece of history whatever, that had been originally written in Saxon, and could be determined to a certain year, or near it, into one body of Saxon annals with proper distinctions to show from whence everything was taken'. His intention was frustrated by the continual pressure of new offices and duties, and after his elevation to the episcopate he confessed sadly that 'his knowledge in that way was almost gone through disuse'.[6]

[1] Plummer: op. cit., p. cxxii, § 120.
[2] R. Gough, *British Topography*, vol. i, p. xxxvii.
[3] Plummer, op. cit., p. cxxxii.
[4] Gibson to Thoresby, 5 Feb. 1694/5, *Letters of Eminent Men addressed to Ralph Thoresby*, vol. i, p. 194.
[5] Plummer, op. cit., p. cxxix, § 124.
[6] Gibson to Charlett, 2 Jan. 1719/20, Ballard MSS. vi. 83.

About this time, too, the problem of his future career and present financial position appear to have caused him considerable anxiety. His friends were eager that he should enter the Church, which was 'the profession he had had all along in his eye', and an interview with Archbishop Tillotson was arranged for him. The Primate 'received him with a great deal of kindness and told him he had no other business at present but barely to know what circumstances he (Gibson) was in'. In particular His Grace asked 'how far he could be excused for non-residence in the College', and promised his young visitor at his departure that 'now he knew his circumstances, he would do him what kindness lay in his power'.[1] Unfortunately this resolution never materialized, and meanwhile Gibson was not in affluent circumstances. His emoluments as Taberdar were small, and a considerable interval must elapse before he could be elected to a Fellowship. It is possible therefore that his publications, during the period from his edition of the *Saxon Chronicle* to the appearance of his *Camden*, were undertaken with a practical aim, and that he had to accommodate his genius to the demands of booksellers.[2]

In 1692 he brought out his 'Librorum Manuscriptorum in duabus insignibus Bibliothecis; altera Tenisoniana, Londonini; altera Dugdaliana, Oxonii; Catalogus', the latter portion of which consisted of a catalogue of Sir William Dugdale's manuscripts in the Ashmolean Museum, and the former of the manuscripts in the library of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, which had been founded by Bishop Tenison (of Lincoln) when rector of that parish. Among these were included the valuable collection of manuscripts of Sir James Ware, which had been purchased by the Earl of Clarendon, when Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and deposited in St. Martin's library, but 'the stiling them *Tenisoniana* offended the honourable owner and

[1] Gibson to Charlett, 20 Dec. 1691, ibid., v. 3.

[2] Hearne writes: 'I am well informed that Dr. Gibson, now Bp. of Lincoln, wrote formerly in a garrett for booksellers,' *Collections*, vi. 120. Gibson himself, during his stay in London to complete his work on Camden, refers to hammering little expenses 'out of the booksellers for little odd jobs' (Tanner MSS. xxv. 138); and repaying a loan of £10 to Dr. Charlett in 1694, apologized that 'his treasure would never conveniently reach it before' (Ballard MSS. v. 50).

the MSS. were immediately removed '.[1] The dedication of the catalogue to Bishop Tenison, however, was the means of introducing Gibson to the notice of that prelate and proved the foundation of his subsequent fortunes.[2]

In the following year, 1693, he published a volume of a very different nature, an edition of Quintilian, *De Arte Oratoria*, which Hearne affirmed to have been undertaken ' to gratify one Cruttenden, a broken printer and a great acquaintance of Dr. Charlett ',[3] who was so impatient to hurry forward the work that the author had not time to make a thorough study of the subject, but produced a version with ' little pains in it '.[4] In point of fact, Gibson contributed a brief introduction, dealing mainly with the authorities used in collating the text, namely three codices and eight printed editions, and added a very short biography of Quintilian. His notes on the text consisted only of variant readings, and were supplemented by a valuable index of subjects and phrases, of Greek words, and of authors referred to, with a list of emendations of the text made from ancient codices. He did not venture upon an essay on Roman oratory. Hearne's strictures, therefore, were too severe and undeserved, for the work gave evidence of considerable skill in the classical languages, as well as of industry in the preparation of the text, and Gibson himself complained of the ' ill natured, severe censures ' which came from Oxford.[5] He sent complimentary copies to Dean Hickes and to Bishop Tenison.

In 1694 he returned to his studies of Roman antiquities in England, publishing two volumes on the subject. The first, *Julii Caesaris Portus Iccius Illustratus*, consisted of a tract of Mr. William Somner on the Portus Iccius—the Gallic port from which Caesar set out to invade Britain—written against Chifflet's book, and now translated by Gibson into Latin,

[1] R. Gough, *British Topography*, vol. i, p. 545.

[2] *Biog. Britannia*, vol. vii, p. 64; *Some Account of the Rt. Rev. Dr. Edmund Gibson*, p. 3. Hearne, *Collections*, ii, p. 46: ' this bibliotheca Tenisoniana . . . made him gracious with Abp. Tenison with whom he continues great still and is like to do so while he makes it his business to cringe, flatter, write for ye Whiggs, &c.,' 16 Sept. 1707.

[3] Hearne, i, p. 217.

[4] Ibid., ii, p. 29.

[5] Gibson to Charlett, 1 Aug. 1693, Ballard MSS. v. 6.

together with a similar translation of Du Fresne's treatise on the same subject, written originally in French and included in the author's *Life of St. Louis*, which Gibson desired to render more accessible to English students. To these he added notes and an introductory dissertation, in which he compared the conflicting statements of his authorities and weighed the evidence on behalf of each. The second publication was another essay of Mr. Somner, *A Treatise of the Roman Ports and Forts in Kent*, published by Mr. James Browne, to which Gibson added numerous and learned notes, and his friend Dr. White Kennet contributed a life of the author. This was described by Thoresby as 'an excellent and instructive treatise, especially with Dr. Gibson's curious notes',[1] and both little volumes showed the industry and skill of the editor to be very considerable.

Meanwhile, however, he had embarked upon a more ambitious undertaking, the preparation of a new edition of Camden's *Britannia*, for which purpose he left Oxford and came to live in London, where he was greatly indebted to the generosity of his uncle Dr. Thomas Gibson, who relieved his financial necessities by taking him into his house, so that 'diet, lodging, washing, etc.', did not cost him a farthing.[2] His removal also gave him the opportunity of meeting several of the most important churchmen of the Capital, clerical and lay. Through the kindness of Dr. Charlett he became a welcome guest at the table of Mr. Pepys, and secured an introduction to the Archbishop of York, and to other lesser dignitaries.

On the other hand, his experience of the wider life of the metropolis almost induced him to desert Divinity for the study of the Law. His friend Dean Hickes, who still showed him 'much kindness and affection' despite his political apostacy, urged him both in conversation and by letter 'by all means to betake himself to the Law and to quit the thoughts of Divinity'.[3] This advice was reinforced and supported by 'several other persons, whose judgements he ought to value',[4]

[1] Thoresby, *Diary*, ii, p. 52.
[2] Gibson to Tanner, 20 April 1694, Tanner MSS. xxv. 138.
[3] Gibson to Charlett, 1 May 1694, Ballard MSS. v. 18.
[4] Tanner MSS. xxv. 138.

and, moreover, was in harmony with his own inclinations and interests. He had nearly three years before he need seek Orders to enable him to accept a Fellowship at Queen's, the study of Law was essential to the other branches of his work on the antiquities of England, and if it should open out any possibility of being called to the bar, 'his own inclinations would infallibly engage him in that way'.[1] He confessed 'that if circumstances would hitt anything tolerably, Law would be the much more eligible profession to him';[2] and if not, he could still return to the study of Divinity and, 'when he was a country parson, to be able to qualifie little petty differences among his neighbours would be a charitable action'.[3] At any rate, on the 4th May 1694 he was registered as a student of the Middle Temple.[4] Charlett and Tanner both wrote in great concern to dissuade him from any notion of forsaking the Church, and he assured them that he had not acted hastily nor could he spare much time for legal studies until the *Camden* was finished. There was no need for apprehension. In the freer atmosphere of London, also, he was realizing the provincialism of Oxford politics. He appreciated 'the convenience and freedom of Coffee House conversation' in the metropolis and insisted that there 'they had a much more accurate understanding of public affairs than in Oxford one could ordinarily have'. He was even persuaded 'that the convenience of studying was no less' there than in the University town, where other duties involved 'a real loss of time to any man that was close fixt and resolved to pursue a design'.[5] The repetition of such sentiments on the occasion of his visits to Oxford raised up a party against him in his

[1] Ballard MSS. v. 18.

[2] Gibson to Charlett, 7 May 1694, ibid., v. 19. [3] Ibid., v. 18.

[4] Certificate of Admission to the Middle Temple. 'Mr. Edmundus Gibson, filius et haeres apparens Edmundi Gibson de Knipe in Bampton in com. Westmoreland, gen: admissus est in societatem medii Templi specialiter et obligatur.

et dat p. fine 04*l.* 00*s.* 00*d.*
et p. feodis 00*l.* 12*s.* 06*d.*

vera copia.
Tho. Griffin.'

Gibson MSS. vii. 4.

[5] Gibson to Charlett, 4 June 1694, Ballard MSS. v. 25.

own college, who determined to delay his admission to the degree of Master of Arts as long as possible. On the 21st February 1694/5, however, he proceeded Master, and shortly afterwards published his edition of Camden's *Britannia* dedicated to Lord Somers.

The last edition of this work had been produced by the author in 1607, and now stood in need of emendation in at least two respects. First, the original had been written in Latin and required translating for the benefit of English readers, and also the study of antiquities had made considerable advances in the meantime, so that there were many new items of information to be added to it. An English translation had been published by Dr. Philemon Holland in 1637, but his lack of skill in antiquarian learning, and his interpolation of several additions of his own into the text of Camden, detracted from the value and trustworthiness of his version. Gibson therefore determined to make an entirely new translation, and to add as much new information as he could procure. His task was really that of editor, for he had the valuable assistance of several of the most learned scholars in the kingdom. In particular he was indebted to Mr. Evelyn for the notices of Surrey; to Mr. Thomas Tanner for those of Wiltshire; to Mr. White Kennet for those of Oxfordshire; to Ralph Thoresby for those of the West Riding of Yorkshire; to Archdeacon William Nicolson for those of Northumberland; to Mr. Edward Lhwyd, Keeper of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, for those of Wales; to Sir Robert Sibbald for those of Scotland; to Sir Richard Cox for those of Ireland; and to Mr. Pepys for 'the account of the arsenals for the Royal Navy in Kent, with the additions to Portsmouth and Harwich so far as they concerned the business of the Navy'. Gibson's office was to co-ordinate the notices and translations of his contributors, making such alterations in their papers only as were necessary to bring them into an evenness and uniformity of style. The translation of Camden's text was 'plain and natural', aiming to reproduce 'the sense of the author with a justness and propriety of expression'. The additions which Gibson made, and which embodied the new information conveyed to him,

were not incorporated in the text, but collected in a body at the end of each county with appropriate references in the version itself. A novel feature was the inclusion of a list of plants peculiar to each county, compiled with the assistance of Mr. Ray and other skilled botanists. The maps had been carefully chosen and corrected by Mr. Robert Morden, so that the editor affirmed them to be 'much the fairest and most correct of any that had yet appeared'. He himself had added a life of Camden, which was really 'a bald translation' of the elegant Latin account by Dr. Smith.[1]

The publication was certainly successful. The editor and his benefactor, Dr. Charlett, were well justified in their enterprise. It had a powerful effect in stimulating the study of local antiquities and its popularity was demonstrated by the fact that it went to the fourth edition within fourscore years. For several years after its appearance Gibson continued to inquire after and to collect further items of information with a view to a more perfect and expanded edition. In 1718 he wrote to Charlett that 'the Camden's *Britannia* had been ready for the press these seven years, and he had revised it once more that summer at Bugden'.[2] In the following year he reported that it was in the press, but its progress was delayed because, as Bishop of Lincoln, 'the business of his diocese and other business on his hands made it necessary for him to oblige Mr. Churchill and the printers to drive gently'.[3] At length, in 1722, the second edition appeared, expanded into two folio volumes. The translation had been completely revised and corrected by comparison with the Latin original. The additional notes were not placed at the end of each county, as had been done before, but were incorporated with the text and distinguished from Camden's account by enclosure within square brackets. The appearance of the first edition had stimulated many students to undertake research into the antiquities of various counties, and their discoveries, communicated to Gibson, were included in the additional notes. The Bishop

Preface to R. Gough's edition of Camden's *Britannia*, London, 1789; Hearne, *Collections*, iii. 65.

[1] Gibson to Charlett, 30 Oct. 1718, Ballard MSS. vi. 79.

[2] Same to same, 23 April 1719, ibid., 81.

of Sodor and Man had contributed a new article on the Isle of Man, and Bishop Gibson himself had written an historical account of the Act of Union of England and Scotland. The maps of the previous edition had been criticized adversely,[1] and they had therefore been 'revised by knowing and skilful persons in each county', and rendered more accurate, even though not entirely perfect. The effect of this edition was to increase the interest in the subject, so that a third edition appeared in 1753, and a fourth in 1772, 'with a few corrections and improvements from his lordship's MSS. notes in his own copy and a continuation of the pedigrees to the time of publication' by the bishop's son-in-law, George Scott.[2] There can be no doubt that Gibson's work in introducing Camden to the English student had been exceedingly important.

'The republic of letters has great obligations to Bishop Gibson. For if Camden first restored Antiquity to Britain and Britain to antiquity, his lordship restored Camden to himself, rescuing him from the confusion of that universal translator, Philemon Holland, and building on his latest and most improved edition a valuable superstructure.'[3]

Despite the contempt of Hearne, who had 'but a very indifferent, mean opinion of his English edition of Camden and for that reason seldom or never consulted it',[4] it gave great satisfaction to the learned public.

The further progress of these studies, however, led to its being superseded by the fuller and more accurate edition of Richard Gough in 1789. Besides his large additions of new material, Gough made several other improvements on previous editions, by compiling a fresh life of Camden, and inserting extensive transcriptions from Leland's *Itinerary* in order to show the degree of Camden's dependence upon his predecessor. Gough's translation was the work of his own hand alone, thus possessing a greater uniformity and evenness of style than had

[1] R. Gough, *British Topography*, 1780, vol. i, p. 30; Hearne, *Collections*, ii. 146.
[2] R. Gough, *British Topography*, ibid.
[3] Gough, Preface to his edition of Camden's *Britannia*, 1789, p. vii.
[4] Hearne, *Collections*, iv. 161.

been the case with Gibson's compilation. He had also ventured to relieve his version of the archaisms of Camden's style, making it 'an English classic, calculated for every reader',[1] and to omit the explanations inserted by Camden for the information of foreigners, who did not understand the peculiar customs and terms of Britain. He printed the additional information which he had acquired at the end of every county, not in the form of separate notes (as Gibson had done) but as a continuous supplementary essay. Thus he carried on the work which Gibson had begun and superseded his edition, but the honourable distinction belongs to Gibson of producing the first good English translation of Camden and thereby stimulating the interest of scholars in British Antiquities.[2]

In the meantime Gibson had decided to take Orders and to return to the study of Divinity from that of Law. On the 15th November 1694 he wrote to Tanner that 'Divinity called him and he resolved to follow', adding that 'Orders were like to be his portion, and about Lent or Easter, he would enter'.[3] Accordingly he was ordained deacon by Bishop Hough in Magdalen College Chapel on the title of his college on the 19th May 1695.[4] Having entered into Orders, his friends exerted themselves to secure some suitable provision for him in the Church. The promise which Archbishop Tillotson made to him had not materialized, so his case was brought to the notice of the new Primate, Tenison. On the 15th August 1695

[1] Preface to R. Gough's *Camden*, 1789, p. vii.

[2] Cf. 'A Congratulatory Poem on the Translation of the Rt. Rev. Father in God, Edmund, from the See of Lincoln to the See of London', London, 1724, p. 5:

> For though we had lived some ages past
> We lived as strangers on some island cast,
> And scarce knew where we stood till Gibson drew
> Britannia's map and placed her all in view.

[3] Gibson to Tanner, 15 Nov. 1694, Tanner MSS. xxv. 265.

[4] The date given in the *Biographia Britannica* is May 8th, 1695 (or 1696), p. 65. The certificate of Ordination was originally preserved in the Gibson MSS., but is now lost. An entry in the catalogue of these MSS. in St. Paul's Cathedral describes Item No. 68 of the Miscellaneous MSS. as: 'Admission of Edmund Gibson, M.A., of the Foundation of Queen's College to Deacon's Orders by John, Lord Bishop of Oxford, in the chapel of the College of St. Mary Magdalene, 19th May, 1694.' It is evident from the date of Gibson's letter to Tanner that he could not have been ordained in 1694; probably the accurate date is 19th May 1695.

Dr. William Wake assured Dr. Charlett that 'Mr. Gibson was not forgotten, though delayed', adding that Tenison had spoken to him lately about his friend and 'repeated his resolution to take him suddenly into his family'.[1] A few months later the Archbishop himself wrote to Charlett that 'he would shortly come to a resolution about Mr. Gibson and acquaint him with it',[2] but despite these assurances the matter hung fire until Gibson happened to be in London for a brief visit in the following May. At that time he consulted Dr. Wake as to 'what he had best do in the Lambeth business', and the doctor, feeling sure 'that there was no other reason of delay but only forgetfulness', advised him to call upon the Primate. This he did, and a short interview sufficed to settle the matter. Tenison told him that 'now he was on the spot, he hoped his circumstances would allow him to settle immediately and that he (Gibson) would be welcome to his (Tenison's) house next morning'. He was to take up the office of Librarian at a salary of twenty pounds per annum, and his patron concluded the audience by observing that 'he was very glad to see him in Orders and hoped something better would come in due time'.[3] Accordingly Gibson took up his quarters with the archbishop and set to work upon the reorganization of the library. He found 'the printed books and catalogues in soe much disorder, that there was no finding out any book', and foresaw that his task would be onerous.[4] He began the compilation of a catalogue of the library which was continued by his successor, David Wilkins, and completed by Dr. Ducarel. His admission into the household of the Primate brought him into a situation of great possibilities for his future advancement, for no patron could be more influential than the archbishop; and Gibson never forgot that he owed these favours to the friendship of the Master of University College. A few months later also, on the 12th August 1696, he secured the expected Fellowship of his college,[5] though of course his

[1] Wake to Charlett, 15 Aug. 1695, Ballard MSS. iii. 14.
[2] Tenison to Charlett, 9 Oct. 1695, ibid. ix. 14.
[3] Gibson to Charlett, 21 May 1696, ibid., v. 56.
[4] Same to same, 6 June 1696, ibid., 57.
[5] J. R. Magrath, *The Queen's College*, Oxford, 1921, vol. ii, p. 311.

residence had to be excused in consequence of his appointment at Lambeth.

Upon the occasion of his visit to London to prepare his edition of *Camden*, Gibson had been fortunate to 'get accidentally into his hands five bundles of Sir Harry Spelman's Posthumous Papers',[1] which had interested him greatly. At the same time he had made further inquiries and discovered that several other unpublished papers were preserved in the library of Sir Charles Spelman, the author's grandson, in Norfolk, with whom he communicated.[2] He resolved therefore to pursue the matter further, so soon as the *Camden* should be off his hands, and the fruits of his labours were seen in 1698, when he published the *Reliquiae Spelmannianae: The posthumous Works of Sir Henry Spelman, Kt., Relating to the Laws and Antiquities of England.*[3] Gibson's contribution to the book was confined to the short life of Spelman which preceded the essays, the index of authors and a general index, and a preface describing the sources of the papers. In the

[1] Gibson to Tanner, 8 Feb. 1693/4, Tanner MSS. xxv. 119.

[2] Same to same, 21 March 1694, ibid., 130.

[3] The volume included: 'The Original, Growth, Propagation, and Condition of Feuds and Tenures by Knight Service in England', which Gibson had copied from a manuscript in the Bodleian Library corrected with the author's own hand; two discourses 'Of the ancient Government of England' and 'Of Parliaments', which he had transcribed from the MSS. of Sir Charles Spelman; an essay on 'The Original of the four terms of the Year', which had been published in 1684 'from a very uncorrect and imperfect copy', and was now reprinted entire from an original manuscript in the Bodleian; 'A Large Answer' by Spelman to an 'Apology for Archbishop Abbot' which had been published anonymously, together with several letters on the same subject; 'A Treatise of the Original of Testaments and Wills and of their Probates', and an essay on the county of Norfolk, in Latin, entitled 'Icenia, sive Norfolciae Descriptio Topographica', both of which Gibson had copied from manuscripts in the Bodleian; a fragment 'Comites Marescelli Angliae et De Milite Dissertatio', which seemed to have been intended for Spelman's Glossary, but to have been mislaid and never inserted; a brief genealogical sketch, 'Historia Familiae de Sharnburn', 'a piece of antiquity that was exceedingly valued' by the author. Finally two items were added, 'A Dialogue concerning the coin of the kingdom, particularly what great treasures were exhausted from England by the usurp't supremacie of Rome', and 'A catalogue of the Places or Dwellings of the Archbishops and Bishops of this realm (now and of former times) in which their several owners have Ordinary jurisdiction, as if a parcel of their diocese, though they be situate within the precincts of another bishop's diocese': which two were not certainly the work of Spelman, but as Gibson 'found them among his other papers, the accurate knowledge of our English affairs which appeared in both inclined him to believe that he was really the author of them'.

biographical sketch of the author, he devoted his main attention to Spelman's researches into British Antiquities and his attempt to establish a lectureship in Anglo-Saxon at Cambridge.[1] The work was dedicated to Archbishop Tenison. During the course of his preparatory studies, Gibson had found the manuscript of the unpublished 'History and Fate of Sacrilege, discovered by examples of Scripture, of heathens and Christians from the beginning of the world continually to this day', by Spelman, but he deemed it prudent not to publish it, since several English families, who had benefited from the dissolution of the monasteries and the confiscation of their lands, were included in the recital of the penalties of sacrilege and therefore 'some gentlemen might be disgusted at some relations in it'.[2]

In the same year appeared a more important and laborious work, *Catalogi Librorum Manuscriptorum Angliae et Hiberniae in unum Collecti, cum indice alphabetico*, upon which Dr. Charlett and himself had been engaged for several years. In his life of Spelman, Gibson had observed that the majority of manuscripts preserved in England, 'being neglected by the generality of scholars, lay in confusion and were in a great measure useless', to the great discouragement of students who desired access to them. The present catalogue was an attempt to remedy this defect by gathering together into one work a list of the contents of the chief public and collegiate libraries in Oxford and Cambridge, of the various capitular and episcopal libraries, of the more important private collections of documents, and of the chief libraries in Ireland. The task had been carried on under the patronage and encouragement of Tenison, and had involved much effort extending over a considerable period of time. 'Natura enim nihil magnum effici

[1] The lectureship was founded in 1640, endowed with a salary of £20 per annum, and held by Mr. Abraham Wheloc, who published an edition of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. But the misfortunes which fell upon the Spelman family in the Civil Wars prevented them from continuing the bequest, and so the office disappeared.

[2] Hearne, *Collections*, i. 192. Gibson, in his preface, admits that he was restrained by the fear 'that some persons in the present age would be apt to interpret the mention of their predecessors (in such a manner and on such an occasion) as an unpardonable reflection upon their families'.

voluit cito', as Gibson observed in his preface. The editors had the satisfaction, however, of being able to include a survey of the contents of the Bodleian Library and all the college libraries of Oxford, of the public library at Cambridge and of nine college libraries, of the collections of thirteen cathedral churches, of the chief public libraries of England such as Sion College and the colleges of Eton and Winchester, of the most important private collections, and of the chief libraries in Ireland. They had been assisted by several scholars in the compilation of the catalogue, but especially by Mr. Humphrey Wanley, who had prepared the several indices. Gibson himself had prefaced to the Bodleian catalogue a Latin life of Sir Thomas Bodley from his own manuscripts in that library and a short history of the library itself. The complete catalogue, issued in two folio volumes, was a valuable aid to students and a monument of diligent labour.

This succession of books, which testified alike to Gibson's industry and erudition, brought the offer of two small livings in recognition of his merit. Lord Somers, to whom he had dedicated his *Camden*, offered him a small benefice of twenty pounds per annum in the Isle of Thanet, which he declined on account of its unhealthy situation.[1] His college also made a similar offer which gave him considerable pleasure, not only because the act itself was an evidence of the good opinion which the society entertained of him, but also because he could show by his refusal that he 'had a just value for his fellowship and station in the College'.[2] In the meantime he had received Priest's Orders at the hands of the Bishop of Rochester on the 30th May 1697,[3] and having become acquainted with Dr. Hooper, Dean of Canterbury, who also held the rectory of Lambeth, was appointed by him morning preacher in that church.[4] On the 8th November 1698 the Archbishop made him one of his domestic chaplains, a welcome sign of his approbation and favour. It was at this juncture, when Gibson's

[1] *Biog. Britan.*, Art. 'Gibson', supplement.
[2] Gibson to Tanner, 26 Nov. 1696, Tanner MSS. xxiv. 164.
[3] Gibson MSS., Miscellaneous, No. 69 (a).
[4] R. Gough's edition of Camden's *Britannia*, 1789, vol. iii, p. 161; cf. Hearne, *Collections*, i. 217.

prospects of a successful career were already very encouraging, that the outbreak of the Convocation Controversy gave him a unique opportunity to render service to his patron; at the same time he was able both to establish his own reputation as an authority on the history and procedure of Convocation, and to lay the foundations of the knowledge of ecclesiastical law which culminated in the most famous of his works, the *Codex Juris Ecclesiastici Anglicani.*

II

THE CONVOCATION CONTROVERSY

In the year 1664, by a private arrangement between Archbishop Sheldon and Lord Chancellor Clarendon, the clergy waived the privilege of taxing themselves, which they had asserted under Edward I, and submitted to inclusion in the money bills of the House of Commons. This incident was the real cause of the controversy concerning the powers of Convocation which broke out a generation later and continued almost without intermission until the suppression of Convocation in 1717.

The transaction was so little noticed at the time that it was accomplished by a purely oral agreement which passed unchallenged by the clergy whose rights had been thus bartered away. But its significance could not remain long unperceived. Its immediate consequences, indeed, were sufficiently striking. 'One effect quickly appeared, that we hear nothing afterwards of a sitting and acting Convocation throughout the reigns of Charles II and James II.'[1] The Crown had no need for the frequent assembling of Convocation, when its power of making money grants had been surrendered to Parliament. In 1689 the experiment of a sitting Convocation was again essayed, but the severe rebuff which the Lower House gave on that occasion to William III's favourite scheme for a Comprehension of Protestant Dissenters convinced him of the unwisdom of the attempt, and made him resolve to rule the Church henceforth without the assistance of its turbulent presbyters.

Thus at the time of the opening of the Convocation Controversy in 1697 the inferior clergy had serious cause for alarm. There seemed good reason to fear that the Crown would adopt the fixed policy of keeping Convocation under discipline. Furthermore, the position of the inferior clergy, even when assembled in Convocation, was not sufficiently strong to

[1] Gibson, 'Some Thoughts Concerning the Convocation', Gibson MSS., Miscellaneous, No. 117, p. 4.

encourage any hopes that they would be able to impose their will upon their superiors. 'Deriving no authority whatever as a separate house from the ancient annals of the Church, they found little even in their own early history to justify the belief that they were free agents or independent of the bishops.' In these circumstances there was a growing feeling of dissatisfaction among their ranks, which issued in a determination to embark upon an aggressive campaign in order to save their house from sinking into entire insignificance and to recover, if possible, the rights they had lost.

In addition to their zeal for constitutional government within the Church, the clergy were animated by a strong political and theological antipathy to their episcopal governors. The bishops were distasteful to them first as Whigs, the nominees of a king of whom they had 'very ill impressions', and secondly as Latitudinarians and therefore suspected of conspiring with him to introduce Presbyterianism. The agitators demanded the restoration of sitting Convocations only as a prelude to the attack upon the prerogatives of the bishops, which they were planning to deliver in the Convocation itself. This hostility of the lower clergy to their superiors betrayed them into a peculiarly inconsistent and self-contradictory position. 'Their case was to be argued on incongruous and opposing principles; their language spoke of deference and submission to authority, when in conduct they undermined and overpowered it; they insisted on the rights of the ancient Church and yet employed the principles of the recent revolution in the State.'[1] The first step in their strategy was plain. A clamour must be raised for the restoration of sitting Convocations.

The signal for action was given in 1697 by the publication of *A Letter to a Convocation Man*, a pamphlet which showed that the clergy had found a fearless champion of their claims. Beneath the anonymity of the letter-writer was concealed the powerful personality of Francis Atterbury, one of the most brilliant of contemporary Churchmen.[2] From the outset of

[1] Cardwell, Preface to the 1854 edition of Gibson's *Synodus Anglicana*, p. xi.
[2] The author of *A Letter to a Convocation Man* has been generally

the struggle it is hardly an exaggeration to say that, almost unaided, he bore upon his shoulders the entire burden of the fray, both within the walls of the Convocation house and in the incessant pamphlet warfare without. His present argument is interesting and important because it foreshadowed several of the points upon which the later controversy turned. He based his demand for the restoration of sitting Convocations upon the ground, not of grace, but of right, asserting that the King had no more authority to prevent their meeting than he had to refuse to summon the parliament. This he deduced from the continuance of the praemunientes clause in the writs summoning the bishops to parliament, which 'premonition or warning, being to those who are members of and constitute the Lower House of Convocation, is an argument of invincible strength to establish the necessity of Convocations meeting as often as parliaments'.[1] Further, he so interpreted the famous restrictive Act of 25 Henry VIII in regard to the power of Convocation, when summoned, to transact business, as to conclude that 'a leave in general to make Canons is given them by their very writ of summons, and a leave in particular to make this or that Canon is given them when the King assents to this or that particular Canon'.[2] The result of this exposition was to claim for the ecclesiastical assembly a power to debate, draft, and pass decrees upon spiritual subjects equal to that of the Parliament in temporal affairs; and herein was expressed the fundamental tenet of the Lower House party. By introducing the theory that the Convocations were summoned and met in obedience to the praemunientes clause, and by observing that 'the liberties of the Church do in great measure run parallel to those of the State', he prepared the

assumed to be Sir Bartholomew Shower, the eminent Jacobite lawyer (cf. Gwatkin, *Church and State in England*, p. 388). But a passage in Hearne (*Collections*, iii, p. 279) makes it quite clear that Atterbury was mainly responsible. He says (16th Dec. 1711) that Atterbury told him at dinner that 'the letter which goes under the name of Sir Bartholomew Shower . . . was done by three persons, viz. Sir Bartholomew Shower, a clergyman . . . and himself. His own part, he said, was only to cook it and put it into a handsome genteel dress'. But it was Atterbury's style which was the greatest asset to the cause of the Lower House: cf. Beeching, *Atterbury*, p. 53.

[1] *A Letter to a Convocation Man*, p. 38.

[2] Ibid., p. 56.

way for the notion of a parallel between the Convocation and Parliament which was the bulwark of all his subsequent defences.

The immediate result of this pamphlet was to create a great ferment of opinion among the clergy and to bring Dr. William Wake, the future Primate, into the field against Atterbury. In his book, *The Authority of Christian Princes over their Ecclesiastical Synods asserted*, Wake took a strongly Erastian line, deprecating the frequent withdrawal of the clergy from their cures to attend the Convocations, and asserting that though the king was bound by custom to summon Convocations with every Parliament, yet his 'absolute and free will' alone could determine whether they should be allowed to meet for business.[1] In regard to the two chief contentions of his opponent, he completely demolished the idea that the Convocation met in response to the praemunientes clause, observing aptly that 'this is a Convocation that for many years past has had no existence' and from which the present body differed completely, being 'summoned by another sort of writ and consisting of another sort of persons';[2] and he refused to allow to a sitting Convocation any power 'to enter upon any business without the King's special commission for it, and whether he would grant such a Commission depended entirely upon his own will'.[3]

This vigorous defence of the power of the Crown compelled Atterbury to take up pen again to show 'the abhorrence he had of the unworthy treatment which the reputation and rights of the order' of the clergy had suffered. In a pretentious volume on *The Rights, Powers, and Privileges of an English Convocation* he reiterated and developed his favourite theses.[4]

[1] Wake, *The Authority of Christian Princes*, &c., 1697.
[2] Ibid., p. 284. [3] Ibid., p. 140.
[4] Atterbury, *Rights, Powers, and Privileges of an English Convocation*, 1700. In it he dismissed Wake's book as 'a shallow, empty performance written without any knowledge of our Constitution', and as 'a series of long, flat, impertinent accounts, attended with suitable reflections, but without one wise word spoken or true blow struck' (Preface, p. i). Gibson thought that the dispute was 'managed on both sides with overmuch warmth and eagerness, and on the side of Dr. Atterbury with great scurrility and abuse'. 'Some Thoughts Concerning the Convocation,' p. 8, Gibson MSS., Miscellaneous, No. 117.

In particular he pushed his notion of a parallel between the Convocation and the Parliament to the further degree of asserting that in the former 'parliamentary matters were transacted and parliamentary methods observed',[1] and that the ecclesiastical assembly possessed full freedom of debate as 'the original right of all Provincial Synods, incident to their nature'. Upon a further examination of the Act of Submission, his conclusions were even more startling than before. He discovered that the Act had restrained the power of the Archbishop alone, whilst it left all the other members in full enjoyment of all former privileges.

'The Act of 25 Henry VIII has not in the least altered the laws of Convocation in relation to any of the powers or privileges of the inferior clergy; they can still freely consult or debate, petition or represent, upon the matter or form of new Canons and consider about the enforcing of old ones, i. e. in a word, act in all instances and to all degrees as they could before that Statute.'

The powers of the Archbishop in pre-Reformation times, which he compared to those of a King in his Parliament, were now reduced, however, to 'moderating the debates of the Synod and giving his vote last upon any question proposed there. But the powers and privileges of all other members of the Convocation continue whole and entire to them, notwithstanding this statute.'[2] This studied depreciation of the power of the Metropolitan was a necessary preliminary to the attempt by which he was planning to secure independence for the Lower House. In accordance with this same purpose his book was full of the most confident assertions that the Convocations continued to be 'an extrinsic member of Parliament and an estate of the realm necessarily attendant on it', and that the parliamentary interests and privileges of the Commons spiritual and temporal 'ran even always or at least were never very far asunder'.[3]

At this point in the controversy Atterbury succeeded in attaining the first of his objectives, viz. the revival of sitting

[1] Atterbury, op. cit., p. 74, 1st ed.
[2] Ibid., p. 131, 1st ed.
[3] Ibid., p. 306.

Convocations. The new Ministry of William III, which came into office in 1700, stipulated as one of the conditions of their acceptance, that the Convocation should be allowed to sit, concurrently with the newly elected Parliament. This changed situation modified Atterbury's tactics, and diverted the contest into other channels. Consequently, when the final rejoinder of Wake, his *State of the Church and Clergy of England in their Convocations*, appeared in 1703, the principal issues with which it dealt were no longer central in the controversy. None the less, however, it was a complete refutation of his opponent's theories, and a demonstration of the substantial accuracy of his own former position. He not only established his main contentions so firmly 'that no one has since been able to shake them',[1] but presented a copious historical narrative of synodical proceedings in England from the time of the Saxons, in which the history, development, and business of those assemblies were clearly set forth.

Meanwhile the dispute had been diverted into new channels. In the situation which had arisen as a result of the change of ministry there was no longer any need to inveigh against the tyranny of a prince who would not suffer the Convocations to meet. 'The controversy produced a sitting Convocation, and the sitting Convocation produced a new controversy.'[2] The enemy of the lower clergy now was the Archbishop, whose exercise of his authority as Metropolitan prevented the success of their bold bid for synodical independence. Therefore their champion had to effect a change of strategy. In order to secure a triumph over the Upper House, he turned to the secular arm for help, magnifying the royal power in order to depress that of the Archbishop, and showing a sudden zeal for copying the methods of procedure in civil assemblies in order to avoid obeying the rules of the divinely ordained episcopate. With this change of tactics there came also a change of personnel. Hitherto the combat had been mainly between Wake

[1] Lathbury, *History of the Convocation*, p. 324; Wake's *State of the Church and Clergy*, &c., was a massive volume of six hundred folio pages with a further two hundred and fifty pages of notes.

[2] Gibson, 'Some Thoughts Concerning the Convocation', p. 9, Gibson MSS., Miscellaneous, No. 117.

and Atterbury, though the former had been supported by Dr. White Kennet in his *Ecclesiastical Synods and Parliamentary Convocations* (1701),[1] and by Dr. Hody. Henceforth the most important defender of the bishops' cause was Dr. Gibson, and it is from the standpoint of his career and contribution to it that the controversy must now be considered.

Unfortunately neither Gibson's natural talents nor his official position enabled him to present the most interesting and spectacular aspects of the conflict. Atterbury possessed all the qualities necessary to breathe life into the dry bones of a dispute concerning obscure points of constitutional history, and it was his good fortune, on the eve of the opening of Convocation, to secure a seat in the Lower House by his elevation to the Archdeaconry of Totnes. Gibson, on the contrary, did not become a member of Convocation until 1705, when the main interest of the contest had subsided, and the general opinion was that 'it was fit, long since, that an end should be put to the unhappy and pernicious dispute'.[2] Atterbury threw the entire force of his powerful personality, his infectious enthusiasm, and vigorous invective into the fray, identifying himself completely with the cause he had championed. Gibson's intervention, on the other hand, was quite impersonal. His position as librarian and chaplain to the Archbishop gave him unequalled facilities for consulting the ancient ecclesiastical records, to which the claims of the opposing parties must be referred for judgement. With indefatigable industry he searched through the precedents of centuries to refute, point by point and line by line, the arguments brought forward by his adversary in defence of the claims of the Lower House. Atterbury was compelled as part of his policy to issue a series of pamphlets expounding the principles of his action, which took the form of erratic incursions into the field of constitutional history. It was Gibson's duty to meet these challenges one by one, to examine their

[1] Gibson pronounced this book 'either a demonstration of his adversary's ignorance of the cause, or the falsest book in point of history that was ever written'. Gibson to Charlett, 12 Feb. 1700–1, Ballard MSS. vi. 25.

[2] Gibson to Thoresby, *Letters of Eminent Men addressed to Ralph Thoresby*, vol. i, p. 435.

contents, and to refute their conclusions by comparing them with the evidences of the practice of former centuries, drawn from the records of Convocation. In the seclusion of his study the Archbishop's chaplain forged the weapons which the Primate used in the battle within the Convocation house itself. Throughout the controversy, therefore, Gibson's personality was hidden behind that of the Metropolitan, or revealed only partially in the learned essays which issued from his pen.

In its theoretical and antiquarian aspect, the dispute was undeniably dull. This fact was fully understood by Atterbury, who therefore determined to relieve the monotony of the argument by the vigour of his style. He confessed that the real reason for his invective and abuse of his adversaries, ' 'twas to inspirit a dull and dry subject '.[1] Gibson, on the contrary, entirely refused to introduce personal motives or references into the debate. He had expressed the wish in regard to the preceding controversy of Wake and Atterbury ' that a controversy depending between clergymen and about the rights of the Church had been managed in a more calm and Christian way ',[2] and he was determined not to give any cause of offence himself. He resolved, whilst denouncing the mischievous principles of the Lower House party, to refrain from personal reflections on their leaders. His appeal was to precedents, not to passions.

To illustrate the points at issue in this pamphlet warfare it is necessary to outline briefly the main questions of dispute which arose in the sessions of the Convocation itself. That assembly met on the 10th February 1700; Gibson from the outset ' could foresee nothing but confusion and defiance ',[3] as a result of the immoderate excitement which had been aroused; while Archdeacon Nicolson of Carlisle, himself not

[1] Bp. Nicolson's *Diary*, 29 Feb. 1707/8: ' Dr. Mandevil, who din'd with me, gave me ye excuse made by our Dean (i. e. Atterbury) for treating ye said Bp. (Wake, bishop of Lincoln in 1705) and others so barbarously. 'Twas to inspirit a dull and dry subject.' *Transactions, Cumberland and Westmoreland Antiq. Society*, n.s., vol. iv (1904).

[2] Gibson to Charlett, 18 April 1700, Ballard MSS. vi. 7. Gibson also disapproved of ' the provocations given by Dr. Wake in his reflections on ye clergy desiring a Convocation. It was to be wisht that none of these expressions had dropt from him '.

[3] Gibson to Charlett, Shrove Tuesday 1700/1, ibid., vi. 27.

without experience of the fury of spiritual tempers, commenting on the elevation of Atterbury to archidiaconal rank, observed that 'if there should happen to be a majority of his kidney, he'd as soon hope to have the Church's peace established by a Convocation of English bulldogs'.[1] The assembly proceeded speedily to fulfil these melancholy predictions. The Lower House first appointed a Committee to inspect the Convocation books, and report concerning the precedents of prorogations; and then committed two irregularities by continuing their debates for a little time after the schedule of prorogation had been received from the Upper House, and by resolving on their reassembly not to meet with the bishops in the Jerusalem Chamber but to repair directly to their own house, Henry VII's chapel, in order to assert their independence. Accordingly a sharp passage of arms ensued at the next session between the two houses on the latter point. This squabble was but the beginning of a series of dissensions. On March 31st the Lower House passed by 66 votes to 24 a motion asserting their right of separate adjournment, and resolved to request a Free Conference with the Upper House, which was, according to White Kennet, 'the very first Synodical Conference that had even been desired by the lower clergy' in the history of Convocations.[2] A further novelty was introduced on April 8th by the appearance of a deputation of the clergy before the bishops without the Prolocutor at their head, whereupon the Archbishop refused to grant an audience, but instead summoned the whole body to appear before him, and in their presence caused the schedule of prorogation to be read. In defiance of this official act, Atterbury and the Prolocutor led their followers back to Henry VII's chapel, and there a new debate was entered upon, the company finally deciding to adjourn itself to an intermediate day. Before the full Convocation met

[1] Nicolson to Charlett, 6 May 1700, ibid., iv. 6.

[2] White Kennet, *A History of the Convocation of the Prelates and Clergy of the Province of Canterbury summoned to meet on Feb. 6th, 1700*, p. 105. The account of the proceedings is taken from *A Narrative of the Proceedings of the Lower House of Convocation* (the official apologia of the Lower House); Atterbury, *A Faithful Account of some Transactions in the last three Sessions of the present Convocation*; White Kennet, *The Present State of Convocation*, and *A History of the Convocation*.

again on May 9th, the rebellious presbyters had held three intermediate sessions, a practice entirely unknown in previous Convocations; and when at the next meeting the Metropolitan informed them of his decision to appoint a joint committee of five bishops and ten clergy to inspect the acts of the present Convocation in both houses, the Lower House refused to make any elections for this end, and adjourned to another intermediate day. As a result of this disobedience, formal communication between the two houses was suspended at the next full session, and no schedule of prorogation was sent down by the President to the Prolocutor. Gibson's comment on these proceedings was to remind his friend Dr. Charlett that 'he would never believe him that the Convocation would run to such extremities as would become a scandal to the Church, but now he must own his title to be a prophet' and to remark on the seriousness of the situation in which 'the two Houses were so far apart as to have no correspondence'.[1] To him it seemed that 'the best thing they could hope for now was a speedy prorogation to send them home, and divert men's thoughts from the quarrels and divisions of the clergy'.[2] No such immediate release was possible, however, and the Convocations became the scene of even more disgraceful spectacles.

Two further intermediate sessions led up to the full session of May 30th, which was marked by an altercation between the Prolocutor and the Bishop of Bangor, a unique testimony of which is preserved in the Acts of the Upper House in the complaint of the Bishop 'that the Prolocutor had prevaricated with him'.[3] On June 6th a similar episode occurred, when the impetuous Burnet added heated words to the discussion; so that Gibson confessed that he 'did not care to think' of the hard words which had passed in both houses, 'nor was it for the credit of their Order to have them known'.[4] The remaining sessions were mainly occupied with the attempt of the Lower House to obtain a Synodical censure on Burnet's

[1] Gibson to Charlett, 3 June 1700, Ballard MSS. vi. 33.
[2] Gibson to Charlett, Ballard MSS. vi. 33.
[3] White Kennet, *A History of the Convocation*, p. 178; *A Narrative of the Proceedings of the Lower House*, p. 65.
[4] Gibson to Charlett, 10 June 1701, Ballard MSS. vi. 34.

book on *The Thirty-Nine Articles*, and the replies made by the bishops to their representations. Finally the Convocation was prorogued with the Parliament on the 24th June 1701, and the prorogation continued by royal writs until the dissolution of the one terminated the stormy career of the other.

An interval of six months elapsed before the new Convocation assembled in January 1702, during which time it might have been hoped that the *odium theologicum* would have abated a little. Atterbury, however, had employed the recess in one of his occasional excursions into constitutional history and had emerged with a new weapon. He had found in the Register of the Convocation of 1586 that, instead of the usual form of intimation of the prorogation—which ran, 'Prolocutor intimavit hanc convocationem esse continuatam'—there had been used in some of the earlier sessions another, which ran: 'Prolocutor continuavit et prorogavit quoad hanc domum.' Of this discovery he made immediate use, proposing on January 28th at the first official meeting of the Lower House, that this form should be used instead of the customary one, and the resolution was carried despite the protests of the minority. An attempt was made to rescind it on February 3rd, on which day the Prolocutor adjourned the Lower House by his own authority. These incidents led to a long debate on the 9th, and an attempt to settle the question by the appointment of a committee of both parties to consider the whole matter of prorogations. This committee devised a formula which seemed to afford a way out of the difficulty, but it was soon evident that the compromise satisfied nobody. The illness and death of the Prolocutor, however, altered the course of proceedings. The Archbishop, by successive prorogations, prevented the election of a new Prolocutor, so that the Lower House could not meet for business, though the faithful followers of Atterbury persisted in holding a few pretended sessions, until the sudden death of William III on March 8th terminated their unquiet career by dissolving the Convocation *ipso facto*.

In the meantime the claim of the Lower House to independence was being fiercely canvassed in a series of pamphlets. The appeal to the general public as arbiter in discussions

between clergymen concerning points of Church discipline and regimen was a new phenomenon in ecclesiastical controversy, but it had been started by the author of *A Letter to a Convocation Man* and was continued with increasing vigour. It was evident that the pretended right of the clergy to separate adjourments was the most vital of the claims they had put forward, and accordingly it was chosen by Atterbury as the chief point of his pamphlet on *The Power of the Lower House to adjourn itself vindicated.* He stated that three things were necessarily involved in the notion of a house, namely, a right of separate debate, of negative upon the decisions of any other part of the same body, and of sitting and rising at discretion. Moreover, the actual rights of the Lower House of Convocation were to be deduced from those of the House of Commons, because the division of the ecclesiastical assembly into two houses was evidently an imitation of the Parliament. From this it followed logically that 'all those rights and privileges which were absolutely and indispensably necessary to the being of an house (in the parliamentary sense of the word) the clergy must have by virtue of their origin and alliance'.[1] In order to establish this parallel, however, the fact that the Convocation met before the Archbishop and in answer to his writ had to be accounted for. This was done by a novel interpretation of the Act of Submission, which required the Convocation to be summoned 'by authority of the King's writ', so that it was maintained that the Metropolitan's act was 'not authoritative but ministerial'. If it was the King, then, and not the Primate who called together the Convocation, in like manner its adjournment must be the act either of the power which caused it to assemble or of the body itself; and here again the example of the Parliament showed that whilst the Sovereign interposed for the final dissolution, all intermediate adjournments were at the will of the houses themselves. This conclusion comprehended several other points, such as the power of the Lower House to appoint committees to meet during the intervals of the sessions, and

[1] Atterbury, *The Power of the Lower House to Adjourn Itself Vindicated*, p. 3, London, 1701.

the reduction of the Archbishop's authority to the 'presiding over one House and the Prolocutor over the other', since he could only be called President of the Convocation by courtesy. Finally there remained the problem of the transmission of the schedule of prorogation from the Upper House to the Lower, an act which certainly carried the appearance of authority. Atterbury, however, urged that 'the fact of the prorogation being always pronounced in the Lower House itself, and by their own Prolocutor, was a very strong presumption that it was done by the authority of the House itself'. The transmission of the schedule was merely designed to give 'a more formal and honourable notice of what was done above', and the decision of the clergy to reassemble at the same time as the bishops was an act 'not of necessity but of choice'. The same line of defence was adopted by Dr. Hooper, the Prolocutor, in his preface to the *Narrative*, the official apologia drawn up by the Lower House in 1701.

In reply Gibson, in his pamphlet, *The Right of the Archbishop to Continue or Prorogue the whole Convocation asserted*, dealt with his opponent's contentions one by one. With arguments from the abstract nature of a house he would have no concern. 'Points of power, privilege, and jurisdiction were determined by usage and precedent, not by uncertain inferences from the nature of things'; this was characteristic of his argument. The theory of a parliamentary parallel had already been shown to be fanciful, and the Convocation which met in response to the praemunientes clause had no real existence. Nor could the ministerial theory of the Archbishop's act in summoning Convocation be supported by facts. The mandate which the Archbishop issued to the Bishop of London at that day was identical with that issued by his predecessor in the early years of Henry VIII; and assuredly, 'if the Archbishop's summons of a Convocation which before the Statute was authoritative had been thereby made ministerial, this must have unavoidably created great alterations in the writ and in his manner of executing it'.[1] Moreover, the attempt to equate the relation between the two Houses of

[1] Gibson, *The Right of the Archbishop to Continue*, &c., p. 11, London, 1701.

Convocation with that of the Lords and Commons of Parliament was contradictory to the fundamental principle of an Episcopal Church. The claim to a power of separate adjournment ' evidently introduced a co-ordinate power of presbyters with their bishops, and prepared the way for a state of presbytery by making all instances of submission to be acts of choice not of duty '. Atterbury had admitted the obligation of the clergy to reassemble on the day appointed in the Archbishop's schedule, though he had explained it as one of voluntary deference, but there was no guarantee that the Lower House would continue to observe it, unless ' they were included in His Grace's continuation, to which alone their obligation to meet could be justly ascribed '.

The problem of the authority of the schedule of prorogation, sent down by the President to the Prolocutor, was difficult to solve from the standpoint of the clergy, and Atterbury had to devote considerable attention to it. In his next publication, *The Case of the Schedule Stated*, he offered a very summary solution, arguing that since the schedule was ' nothing but an adjournment reduced to writing ', and since ' the Archbishop's oral adjournment in his own house could not possibly be supposed to include and dismiss another body of men, who did not hear it, consequently neither could his adjournment by a written instrument include and dismiss an absent house '.[1] Its purpose was merely to inform the clergy of the adjournment of the bishops, which information was ' conveyed, perhaps, in a whisper of the Register to the Actuary, or the Prolocutor, and so privately given that it was not thought fit to be mentioned in the public acts of either house '.[2] The argument was ingenious, but it did not face the fundamental fact—which was pressed home again by Gibson in his reply, *The Schedule Review'd*—that the logical conclusion of the doctrine of separate continuations was that the clergy ' might legally deny their attendance on His Grace's day whenever they pleased ' ; and if they once did this, the unity of the Convocation would be broken without any possibility of repair.

[1] Atterbury, *The Case of the Schedule Stated*, p. 21, London, 1702.
[2] Ibid., p. 50.

Gibson urged that the only means of keeping the two houses in correspondence was the President's power of inflicting ecclesiastical censures upon members who were absent without his leave, which censures 'could not be inflicted on persons not included in his continuation, because they had no command or warning from him to pay their attendance'.[1] In point of fact the so-called 'intermediate sessions' of the Lower House had been attended only by the party of the majority, who had no authority to compel the attendance of the opposition, without which they were not a full house. There was no escape from the logic of this argument. On the other hand, Gibson maintained that the weight of tradition in favour of the transmission of the schedule was in itself a presumptive proof of its being 'the notice of an authoritative act, which wanted nothing but a legal intimation to make it binding in virtue of the President's authority', especially when reinforced by the previous consideration that the Lower House could exercise no authority over its members because 'presbyters of an Episcopal Church could have no authority over their fellow presbyters'.

So completely was Atterbury driven off the field in this argument that he had recourse again to his old and favourite theory of *The Parliamentary Original and Rights of the Lower House of Convocation*, which he expanded and further developed. Inevitably he based his case upon the fallacy of the praemunientes clause. The combination of the royal writ and the archiepiscopal mandate in the summoning of Convocation suggested to him the novel idea of an intermixture of the two sovereign powers, which 'made way for the customs and usages of Parliament to take place in our Synods and by several steps and degrees reduced one part of the Constitution to strict correspondence with the other'.[2] As an example of this similarity he compared the office of Prolocutor with that of Speaker of the House of Commons, affirming that the object of the former was 'to carry on the conformity hitherto kept

[1] Gibson, *The Schedule Review'd*, p. 6, London, 1702.
[2] Atterbury, *The Parliamentary Original and Rights of the Lower House of Convocation cleared*, p. 7.

up between the ecclesiastical and the civil constitution' and 'to give a parallel and synodic testimony, as it were, of the right which the lower clergy then had to act separately from their bishops'.[1] In one respect at any rate the resemblance was real. The Lower House had a right of negative upon all final decisions of the bishops, which was derived originally from their consent to the granting of subsidies; and this right of a negative Atterbury pushed to such an extreme as to conclude that 'the two Houses of Parliament were not more completely separated in this respect than those of Convocation'. Finally he asserted that 'an House of Convocation so descended from an House of Parliament, and modelled upon the platform of it, and resembling it in several forms, usages and intents, could not well be imagined to want the first right of a Parliamentary House, the right of adjourning itself'.[2]

This revival of the old notion of a parliamentary parallel brought Gibson into the fray once again with a demonstration entitled *The Pretended Independence of the Lower House upon the Upper a groundless notion.* Reviewing first his opponent's scheme of a corresponding development of the civil and ecclesiastical assemblies, he observed that, as the clergy did not claim to possess all the privileges of the Commons, but only certain specified ones, therefore their claim must be tested by an appeal only to 'the practice and proceedings of former Convocations'.[3] On this basis he demonstrated the falsity of the supposed similarity between the position of the Prolocutor and of the Speaker. The only principle of unity in an English Convocation was, not the union of each house in its respective head, but 'the union of bishops and clergy in their Metropolitan, whose presence (either in person or by his commissary) is absolutely necessary to make a session'.[4] So also the claim to a general negative, as distinguished from a negative over final decisions, was 'immediately destructive of the superiority of bishops over presbyters both in authority and order, for it plainly reduced them to a co-ordinate state'.

[1] Atterbury, *The Parliamentary Original and Rights of the Lower House of Convocation cleared*, p. 17.
[2] Atterbury, op. cit., p. 53.
[3] Gibson, *The Pretended Independence of the Lower House*, &c., p. 9.
[4] Ibid., p. 11.

In brief the question at issue between Atterbury and Gibson was whether the authorities for regulating the procedure of the Convocation should be sought in the records of past Convocations, both in pre-Reformation times and since, or in *a priori* notions of the powers necessary to the nature of a 'house', and in supposed precedents based on a false analogy.

The appeal to the records and traditions of past Convocations was worked out by Gibson in his *Synodus Anglicana*, or *The Constitution and Proceedings of an English Convocation*, which he published in 1702 and which proved to be not only the most valuable and important book produced by the controversy, but the standard text-book of Convocational procedure.[1] It was by no means a party work, for the author in compiling it had 'industriously laid by the late accounts of both sides concerning the nature of an English Convocation, resolving to give way to no impressions but what should come immediately from the registers themselves'.[2] Since the majority of the registers had been destroyed in the Fire of London, those which were preserved had to be used to illustrate and correct the evidence of a continuous practical tradition in order to construct an accurate account of the proceedings of an English Convocation. The first consideration was the manner in which the Synod was summoned. Since the Reformation the Archbishop had been restrained from issuing his mandate until authorized to do so by a royal writ, but his act had not been thereby reduced from an 'authoritative' to a 'ministerial' status, for the king's writ itself contained the express direction 'modo debito convocari faciatis'. When the bishops and clergy appeared before him, he appointed commissioners to examine the reasons offered by those who had not obeyed his summons, and pronounced sentence of contumacy against all who had wilfully absented themselves,[3]

[1] 'The work of Bp. Gibson on the subject of Convocation is *facile princeps*,' Phillimore, *The Ecclesiastical Law of the Church of England*, vol. ii, p. 153.

[2] Gibson, *Synodus Anglicana*, Preface, p. iv, London, 1702.

[3] 'Quo quidem certificatorio perlecto, statim porrigitur eidem Reverendissimo schedula descripta, per quam pronunciat omnes ad eosdem diem horam et locum non comparantes contumaces, reservando poenam eorum contumaciae in aliquem diem competentem pro beneplacito ipsius Reverendissimi.' *Forma sive descriptio Convocationis celebrandae prout ab antiquo observari consuevit*, 1562.

thus demonstrating that the power to require attendance, or to excuse it, belonged to him alone, so that no one could be obliged to attend any session not appointed by him. After declaring the reasons for which the Convocation had been summoned, he next instructed the lower clergy to retire and choose a Prolocutor, whom they were charged to present to him on a day specified, for his confirmation. Gibson traced carefully the origin and development of the office of Prolocutor, showing that it had arisen when, the Convocation being still one house, the President charged the lower clergy to withdraw for the consideration of some particular question and after deliberation to report their opinion to the bishops; and that when the Synod became divided into two houses, the Prolocutor became a permanent officer of the Lower House, his duties being to deliver the instructions of the Upper House to the presbyters, and to represent the opinion of the clergy to their superiors. The several branches of his office, therefore, were 'executions of what the President formerly did in person and now did by the Prolocutor, solemnly admitted and confirmed for those ends'.[1] It followed from this that, in case the Prolocutor were disabled from attendance by sickness, the consent and confirmation of the Archbishop were necessary to the election of a Sub-Prolocutor.

Since the development of the office of Prolocutor was closely bound up with the separation of the Convocation into two houses, Gibson proceeded to trace the course of this division, demonstrating that it was a gradual process and one which did not keep pace with the division of the Parliament. Originally, as has been noted above, the separation arose from the occasional commands of the Metropolitan to the clergy to retire and deliberate apart on some particular matter, and, as the business of the Convocation increased, the withdrawals became more frequent

[1] The office of Prolocutor is described in the following terms: 'Ut is intellectis et scrutatis caeterorum omnium votis tanquam unum eorum omnium os et organum loquatur, et consonam eorum sententiam eidem Reverendissimo cum ad hoc rogatus seu missus fuerit, caeteris silentibus, fideliter referat. Qui ex hoc munere Referendarius sive Proloquutor communiter denominatur.' 'Forma sive descriptio convocationis celebrandae,' 1562.

and ordinary, until they developed into a permanent separation. In all these cases, however, the division was 'the sole effect of the business proposed to them by the Archbishop and bishops, and not of their own pleasure or occasion'. Nor did the President relinquish his power of directing the business of the Synod, after its division into two houses. At the opening session he still declared to the full assembly of bishops and clergy the business which it was proposed to lay before them, and after the formation of the Lower House by the election of a Prolocutor, if the bishops decided to appoint a joint committee of both houses for the consideration of any matter, their commands were conveyed to the presbyters, who obeyed without demur. The same rule applied to the case of the nomination of a committee of the clergy alone; there were many examples and precedents, in which the Archbishop had specified the number of persons to be elected, had required a return of their names to be made, and had prescribed a day for the presentation of their report. Until the last Convocation there had never been any instance of a refusal on the part of the clergy to obey their lawful superiors.[1] The Lower House, on the other hand, had an indisputable right to present their *Gravamina* or *Articuli Cleri*, wherein they laid before the bishops 'the grievances under which they laboured, and, with a dutiful submission to the judgement of their lordships, prayed redress'. This custom had arisen from the right of the clergy to assent to taxation, in consequence of which they had added to their subsidies petitions of grievances to be redressed. From this same source arose, also, the peculiar prerogative of English presbyters, their power of a negative upon the final resolutions of Convocation. This particular right was 'the greatest power enjoyed by the English clergy in a Provincial Synod, beyond the presbyters of other nations'. But it extended only to final resolutions, not to the preparatory stages through which the business of the Synod passed, so that the clergy could not refuse to discuss any matter referred to them from above, nor decline to attend a joint committee of both houses.

Passing lastly to the problem of prorogation, which had

[1] Gibson, *Synodus Anglicana*, cc. vii–x.

been the most hotly contested of all points of difference, Gibson observed that, as the writ summoning the Convocation ran in the name of the Archbishop alone, so it included both inferentially and specifically the power of continuing or proroguing also: 'cum continuatione et prorogatione dierum et locorum prout convenit.' Accordingly the schedule of prorogation did run in the President's name, and when the royal writ was issued for the final dissolution of the synod, it directed that 'debito modo prorogetis'. The actual use of a schedule of adjournment could be traced back to 1529, when it was 'begun for the convenience of transmitting it to the inferior clergy'.[1] Indeed there could be no other reason for the signature of the President and the attestation of the Registrar to a paper already read to the Upper House, save that it was intended as an official notice to the Lower House that by it the Convocation had been prorogued. Also, since the business of the assembly was declared to be suspended 'in statu quo nunc est', it was absurd for one house to claim the right to hold intermediate sessions to carry on such business. The authority of the President to prorogue was further shown by a number of instances in which, after prorogation, he had determined to reassemble the members at an earlier day, and had accordingly altered the date without asking the assent of the clergy. Similarly, after the transmission of the schedule, the Prolocutor, in reading its contents, used a form which implied that its authority came from above. 'Prolocutor intimavit hanc convocationem esse continuatam.' The alternative formula, which had been discovered and exploited by Atterbury, was explained in the following way; in the entire registers of the Convocations of 1586 and 1588, it was used only seven times, against thirty-six instances of the ordinary one, and on each of these exceptional occasions the Prolocutor had been put into the President's commission to prorogue, and therefore shared his authoritative power.[2]

In like manner Atterbury had rested his case for the holding of intermediate sessions upon obscure precedents derived from the troubled Convocation of 1640. In the unofficial minutes, which

[1] Gibson, *Synodus Anglicana*, p. 228. [2] Ibid., p. 244.

were the only records of that year which had survived, it was stated that the Archbishop's commissioner prorogued the Convocation from May 5th to the 9th and thence to the 13th, but the Lower House was continued from the 5th to the 8th, and thence to the 13th. The circumstances of the case, however, presented grave objections to the authority of these statements; in the first place they were derived merely from the unofficial minutes taken by the actuary of the Lower House; and secondly the Parliament had been dissolved on the 5th, and since the king wished the Convocation to remain in session, though doubts were raised as to the legality of such a step, a new Commission was issued on the 12th to set at rest all scruples. Therefore the meetings held between the 5th and the 13th were unofficial by reason of the legal uncertainty and could not be drawn into precedents. Further, if their accuracy were accepted, they would prove too much; for they would establish the right of the Lower House not only to meet on days when the bishops were not in session, but also to refuse to assemble on days when the Upper House was sitting, a claim which Atterbury had always repudiated. A similar instance, in the same Convocation, in which the bishops adjourned from December 19th to January 13th, and the clergy met on the 23rd, an intermediate day, was explained by Gibson on the ground that the Upper House, after the arrest of Laud for high treason on the 18th, did not dare to meet again, and in fact the whole Synod was thrown into confusion. At any rate it was an evident sign of the weakness of his opponents' case that they were 'forced for its chief support to have recourse to evidences so dark and exceptionable, and to times of such confusion and difficulty'. He was therefore justified upon a thorough examination of the written records, and actual traditions of Convocation, in concluding that

'an English Convocation, though laid under some restraints from the civil constitution, was far from being so much transformed into a civil meeting, as had been pleaded of late; that in the summoning, opening and acting, it appears what it is, an Ecclesiastical Synod of bishops with their presbyters, and neither a parliamentary body on the one hand, nor an assembly of presbyters on the other; and

that it was evident that as to the nature of our Synods at least, it (the English Reformation) left them in the same ecclesiastical state as it found them.'[1]

Meanwhile the discussion of the controversy occupied a prominent place in the private correspondence, the social intercourse, and the public utterances of leading ecclesiastics. The learned antiquary, Thoresby, followed the dispute with the greatest interest, and read the publications of his friend, Dr. Gibson, with enthusiastic approval. He sincerely regretted 'that such contempt should be poured upon such excellent bishops as the good Providence of God had bestowed upon us, than whom he thought this nation never enjoyed more learned and pious prelates, nor more of them, yet strangely affronted by the high flown party, who pretended a veneration for that order their practices seemed to undermine'.[2] He entertained the highest opinions of the *Synodus Anglicana*, judging it 'a most curious and excellent treatise', with 'so pertinent and judicious observations as he hoped would put an end to the controversy'.[3] Dr. Gibson on his part, whilst dispatching a copy of his various pamphlets to his admirer, confessed that 'the multiplying books upon a controversy that began to be tiresome to everybody' had itself 'begun to be a crime',[4] but defended his attitude on the ground that he 'was purely on the defensive, and it was better to have no episcopal church, than to have bishops under the awe and authority of presbyters; for by their present measures an equality would scarce content them'.[5]

Inevitably the dispute formed a favourite topic of discussion in sermons. Gibson himself, being called upon to preach at the consecration of Dr. William Nicolson to the bishopric of

[1] Gibson, Introduction to *Synodus Anglicana*, p. 12. The *Synodus Anglicana* remains a book of permanent value for the study of the procedure of an English Convocation. It was reprinted in 1854, when the revival of Convocation took place, as the most accurate and trustworthy authority on the subject.

[2] R. Thoresby, *Diary*, vol. i, p. 408.

[3] Ibid., p. 374.

[4] Gibson to Thoresby, 8 Jan. 1702/3; *Letters of Eminent Men addressed to Ralph Thoresby*, vol. i, p. 401.

[5] Same to same, 4 March 1702/3, ibid., p. 435.

Carlisle, delivered 'an excellent sermon on 1 Thess. v. 12, subverting the foundations of the Xt. Church-Schism'.[1] He spoke in a very exalted strain of the divine authority of the episcopate, using language much less measured and precise than he affected when writing on matters of constitutional precedent. He exhorted those 'who at any time should reckon their spiritual governors inferior to themselves as to human accomplishments' to remember that 'as God by His Providence separates them for that high office, so by His Holy Spirit He is able to supply them abundantly with wisdom and understanding';[2] and he denounced the rebellious presbyters who 'ought to make themselves examples of obedience', but instead were glad to oppose their superiors. Even in discourses which did not mention openly the all-important subject it was not difficult to discover phrases which doubtless had a hidden reference to it. When Nicolson preached in London on the 8th January 1701 he was 'supposed to have designed the sermon (made seventeen years ago) against Dr. Atterbury'.[3] The clergy who were actually engaged in the stormy debates within the Abbey, naturally found it necessary to relieve the monotony by private gatherings, at the close of the sessions, for social intercourse. One such convivial company was observed by Nicolson, at which 'the Vine in Long Acre was the Locus Synodi, where a Committee of sixteen Lower House men sat, all night, on lowering the price of Claret'.[4]

In the meantime, the quarrels in the Convocation had produced a situation of open hostility between the two houses. During the session of 1702 the accident of the death of the Prolocutor delivered the clergy into the hands of the Archbishop who being determined to take full advantage of his authority left his company at Lambeth on February 19th, and 'went in hast to the Convocation, in order to prorogue 'em

[1] *Diary* of Bishop Nicolson, 14 June 1702, *Trans. Cumbd. and Westmorel'd Antiq. and Archaeol. Society*, n.s., vol. ii, 1902. The reference is undoubtedly to Gibson's consecration sermon, though the phrase 'ye Xt Church-Schism' seems rather strange.

[2] Gibson, *A Sermon preached upon the Consecration of the Rt. Rev. William, Lord Bishop of Carlisle*, p. 13, London, 1702.

[3] Bp. Nicolson's *Diary*, 8th February 1701, vol. i, n.s. (1901).

[4] Ibid., 21 February, vol. i, n.s. (1901).

without choosing a new prolocutor'.[1] The fortunes of the engagement were largely determined by the rise and fall of the Whig and Tory parties in the State. During the reign of William III the Court was on the side of the bishops, but with the accession of Anne, the possibilities became more even. Both parties appealed for help to their political friends. Atterbury sent a copy of one of Gibson's pamphlets against him to Mr. Secretary Harley, complaining of his opponent's determination 'to stir up the ferment', and suggesting that 'proper and pressing methods' be taken and 'that instantly',[2] whilst Archbishop Tenison appealed to Godolphin against the attacks of Atterbury, asking 'if it were possible to be tame and quiet under such provocations'.[3] So long as the Whigs retained the upper hand, the bishops secured influential support. The Queen intervened in 1706, to declare that 'she was resolved to maintain her supremacy and the due subordination of presbyters and bishops as fundamental parts thereof', and again in the following year to pass a severe censure on a recent protest of the Lower House, denouncing it as 'a plain invasion of her royal supremacy' and threatening 'to use such means for punishing offences of this nature as are warranted by law'. On the latter occasion also the Primate scored a tactical success over the clergy, for the Prolocutor being absent without leave when His Grace summoned the Lower House to appear before him, the offender was declared contumacious, and, despite the defiance of his supporters, compelled to submit.[4] In view of the continual friction, however, the natural policy of the Archbishop was to avoid bringing any important business before the Synod, yet even so the bishops could not escape from the attacks of the inferior clergy. Gibson, indeed, thought that Tenison did not go far enough in the matter. His general rule was 'to tell the members of their side that they might stay at their cures, because no business was intended, while the other side were summoning up the most considerable of their

[1] *Diary* of Bp. Nicolson, 19 February 1701/2; *Trans. Cumbd. and Westd. Antiq. and Archaeol. Society*, vol. i, n.s. (1901).
[2] Portland MSS. iv. 155. [3] Ibid., iv. 48.
[4] Gibson, *An Account of the Proceedings in Convocation in a Cause of Contumacy*, 1707.

members to carry on such measures for perplexing the administration in Church and State as they had in their view'. The consequence of this was, that 'the small gleanings in and about London' to whom the defence of the episcopate in the Lower House was committed, cut a very poor figure, and the bishops were continually vexed by the representations sent up by the majority. In Gibson's opinion the Primate should determine, either to give notice 'to their friends in the country to come up, to the end that they might make a creditable appearance', or else to do nothing in the Convocation, but only 'to send a commissary with power to prorogue'.[1] The situation became much worse for the friends of the Archbishop when the Tory reaction set in after the Sacheverell trial. The new ministry was guided by the advice of Atterbury, and a royal licence for business was issued, with letters specifying the subjects to be discussed, without nominating the Archbishop as President, and without previous consultation with him about the nature of the business. The Lower House, under the leadership of Atterbury, now Prolocutor, proceeded to draw up a 'Representation of the Present State of Religion', which was rejected by the Upper House. It is not necessary to follow the profitless dissensions, which continued until the end of the reign. In 1717 the clergy launched an attack against the Bishop of Bangor, who, as Mr. Hoadly, had previously incurred their displeasure by a sermon in 1706, and despite the earnest desire of Nicolson, Gibson (now Bishop of Lincoln) and others 'that no business . . . be entered upon in Convocation, till the present jumble was over',[2] they proceeded to march to their own destruction. The Crown intervened by a writ requiring the prorogation of the Synod, and Convocation was not allowed to meet again for business until the middle of the nineteenth century.

Bishop Nicolson 'could not help congratulating His Grace upon this new prorogation',[3] and most churchmen felt that it was a welcome termination of the bitter controversies which

[1] Gibson to Wake, 29 Aug. 1707, Wake MSS. CCL, vol. xvii, Miscellaneous Letters and Papers, i.

[2] Bp. Nicolson's *Diary*, 17 April 1716/17, op. cit., vol. v. (1905).

[3] Bp. Nicolson to Abp. Wake, 16 Nov. 1717, Wake MSS., ibid.

had lasted for nearly a score of years. But the result was that for nearly a century and a half Convocation was silenced, and the measure which had been at first a deliverance became an oppression. Setting out his thoughts on the controversy in a private memorandum written in 1740, Gibson was impressed by the disadvantages resulting from the complete suppression of Provincial Synods, more than by the disorders which had attended their sessions since the Revolution. He remembered, indeed, the bitterness which had characterized the disputes and the suspicion which had been created between the bishops and clergy, but he feared that two very serious consequences would ensue from the long suspension; 'the one that few members of either House would be living, who understood the manner of those meetings and the method of proceeding; and the other that the Convocation itself would be despised as a dead, lifeless thing and no longer considered as any part of our ecclesiastical constitution'. Yet,

'as one who had been more conversant in those affairs than any one living', he was convinced from his own experience, of 'two very good effects which sitting Convocations had; the first, in training up those of the clergy who were chiefly concerned in the debates there, to a facility and readiness of speaking in the debates of a higher assembly, and the second in turning the minds of the whole body to a much closer attention to the public concerns of the Church than had been observed among the clergy since the disuse of sitting Convocations.'[1]

This last point could be illustrated by numerous instances of useful discussions and reforms which had been initiated by the presentation of the *Gravamina* of the clergy. He thought it desirable therefore that, now tempers had cooled, 'the bishops and clergy should have an opportunity to clear Convocations from the reproach they had laboured under, and to show how useful they might be made to the ends of religion and the order and good government of the Church'.[2] But since the recent controversy had not sprung entirely from

[1] Gibson, Some Thoughts concerning the Convocation, p. 1 (1740), Gibson MSS., Miscellaneous, No. 117.

[2] Ibid., p. 12.

a spirit of faction, Gibson proposed certain practical modifications of procedure in order to facilitate the correspondence between the two houses. He was ready to concede to the Lower House the right

'(1) to enter originally upon the consideration of all such matters as they thought proper. (2) to appoint select Committees for particular purposes and for preparing matters to be laid before the House, on the day appointed in the Upper House for the next meeting of the Synod. (3) to lay before the Upper House any representations whatsoever they judged proper. (4) to continue their debates after the Upper House had risen, and after the schedule of prorogation was brought down to the Lower House and put into the hands of the Prolocutor, he having a discretionary power to intimate it to the clergy when he saw proper, in case he had received no special direction about the time, which had never happened nor probably ever would.'

In addition he suggested that one further concession might be considered; that

'at the opening of a Convocation, the Prolocutor should appoint nine or ten members of the Lower House, . . . to be his Assessors; and, considering the frequent interruptions that must happen in their debates, if the Prolocutor was to convey to the Upper House all resolutions of the Lower . . . the Upper House should be content to receive any written paper by the hand of one of the Assessors, confining all messages by word of mouth to the Prolocutor in person, and reserving to the Upper House their indisputable right of sending for him at pleasure.' [1]

The two points concerning the appointment of a standing committee, and the discretionary power of the Prolocutor to complete the business of the house, before intimating the prorogation, had been proposed by the bishops in 1702, but rejected by the clergy.[2]

The reforms sketched by Gibson would certainly have helped to facilitate the dispatch of business and to solve many of the difficulties of co-operation between the two Houses. But they

[1] Gibson, 'A Scheme for Preventing Disputes between the two Houses of Convocation for the Time to Come', MSS. St. Paul's Cathedral, 17. B. 15.
[2] Gibson, *The Complainer Further Reprov'd*, London, 1705.

did not touch the fundamental anomaly of an English Convocation, on which Atterbury had based his programme, and which consisted in the presence of ecclesiastical and secular elements side by side, united in an unnatural coalition. According to Catholic tradition the government of the Church is exercised by the Episcopate, the function of the clergy being merely to answer questions and present their opinions when required. In an English Provincial Synod, however, the lower clergy, through their right to assent to the voting of subsidies, had secured two important privileges, the right to be present at every meeting of the Synod, and to negative any final resolution. These powers were sufficient to enable them to obstruct the proceedings of the Upper House, but not to give them any real independence to initiate discussions or to establish their equality with the bishops. Atterbury had proposed to cut the Gordian knot by claiming for the Lower House this complete equality. His scheme of a parallel between the Commons Spiritual and Temporal was directed towards the complete emancipation of the presbyters from the control of their superiors. Similarly his theory of the meeting of Convocation in response to the praemunientes clause, of the close correspondence between the Convocation and the Parliament, and his attempt to explain away the restrictive force of the Act of Submission as affecting the powers of the Archbishop alone, were part of his policy to establish the independence of Convocation, as the ecclesiastical Parliament, from all subordination to the Civil Power, except to the shadowy Supremacy of the Crown.[1] On the other hand, Atterbury's opponents were never quite happy at the prospect of frequent meetings of Convocation. The logic of his doctrine —that the Parliament and the Convocation were equal, both being subject only to the Crown, and that the internal relations

[1] Cf. *A Letter to a Convocation Man*, speaking of the impropriety of Parliament dealing with ecclesiastical matters: ''Tis a little too much to suppose country gentlemen, merchants or lawyers to be nicely skilled in the languages of the Bible, masters of all the learning of the Fathers, or the history of the Primitive Church' (p. 15); or of the relations of Church and State: 'these powers are distinct in their end and nature, and therefore ought to be so in their exercise, too' (p. 17).

of the two Houses of the one corresponded to those of the other—appalled them, but they were never quite sure what to do with Convocations. Wake indeed confessed with provocative frankness that

'when a National Church was once thoroughly established, and neither needed any further laws to be made for the enforcing of its discipline, or any new confessions to be framed for the security of its doctrine; when its liturgy and offices were fixed and stated . . . he could not imagine, until something arose to unsettle such a constitution, what a Convocation could have to meet about.' [1]

Even Gibson, whose opinions were much more moderate and who approved of the regular meeting of Convocation, affirmed that

'it was not to be supposed, nor could it be supposed at that day . . . that the thing really aimed at was the Convocation sitting and doing business during the whole continuance of every session of Parliament. And, on the other hand, the right of judging how long the affairs of the Church required the sitting and acting of the bishops and clergy was undoubtedly vested in the Archbishop with the consent of his brethren.' [2]

Both these points were denied by Atterbury, whose schemes failed, however, because the appeal to constitutional history went against him, and because it was seen that his attempt to establish the Catholic Faith involved the subversion of Catholic Order.

[1] Wake, *The Authority of Christian Princes Asserted*, p. 272.
[2] Gibson, Some Thoughts concerning the Convocation (1740), p. 8; Gibson MSS., Miscellaneous, No. 117.

III

FROM LAMBETH TO LONDON

At the opening of the Convocation Controversy in 1698 Gibson was a plain Master of Arts, holding the position of Librarian and Domestic Chaplain to Archbishop Tenison; in 1710 when the Tory reaction swept the Whigs from office and temporarily removed any chances of further favours for their clerical supporters, he had become Dr. Gibson, Rector of Lambeth, Canon and Precentor of Chichester, and Archdeacon of Surrey. The rapidity of his advance is the measure of the value set upon his services to the cause of the Upper House in that contest. At the same time the circle of his acquaintances had so widened that he had become one of the most prominent divines in London, and one for whom higher preferment could be safely prophesied. It will be necessary to mark the steps of his advance and to notice briefly his chief activities in these various offices. On the 1st April 1700 he was instituted to the Rectory of Stisted in Essex, a peculiar of the Archbishop, the duties of which did not give him any trouble because residence was not expected of him. In June 1703 the influence of his patron secured for him a Precentorship and a Canonry of Chichester, and in the following October the Rectory of Lambeth also, which was vacated by the consecration of Dr. Hooper to the see of St. Asaph, and was worth 'three or four hundred pounds per annum'. These preferments, as Thoresby observed, were intended as 'an encouragement to, and reward for the great services which he had done the public by his writings',[1] and in particular for his defence of the Archbishop's

[1] Thoresby, *Diary*, London, 1830, vol. i, p. 144. Cf. Hearne, *Collections*, i. 217: 'By w^ch party [i. e. the Low Church party] he was look'd upon to be so meritorious especially in ye eyes of the Archbishop (who commonly sees with other people's eyes) that he got to be Precentor of Chichester (that being an option of ye Archbishop's) and afterwards by the interest of a parcel of Whiggs in that church, was made Canon Residentiary and about ye same time obtain'd the rich living of Lambeth and half a lectureship at St. Martin's in ye Fields.'

powers in Convocation. His reputation as a preacher secured for him the appointment as Lecturer of St. Martin's in the Fields on the 30th March 1705.[1]

As Rector of Lambeth he discharged faithfully the duties of parish priest and did his best to advance the spiritual well-being of his people. He compiled for them a short tract entitled 'Family Devotion; or a Plain Exhortation to Morning and Evening Prayer in Families, with two forms of prayer suited to those two seasons and fitted for one person in private'; and this form was so widely used that the American Prayer Book as revised in 1789 by Convention included 'A Form of Family Prayer' taken from his tract.[2] To the same end he issued a manual on the Holy Communion, entitled 'The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper explain'd' (1705), in which he gave a simple instruction on the nature of the rite, and sketched a method of preparation by self-examination, repentance, and meditation. As a result of his later connexion as Bishop of London with the Plantations, both these tracts secured a wide circulation among the colonists, so that a minister in Antigua wrote to inform him that they had produced 'an extraordinary effect' upon his own distant congregation, and 'particularly the little tract of his lordship upon the Sacrament had greatly added to the number of his communicants'.[3] After the fashion of the times, Gibson also established a Religious Society in his parish consisting of sixteen members, generally young men, whom he succeeeded in keeping loyal to the Protestant Succession and free from the taint of Jacobitism, during the troubled years towards the end of Queen Anne's reign.[4] The tracts which he wrote for the benefit of his people, the sermons which he delivered to them and the interest he took in the organization of a Religious Society are evidence of his personal piety. He was also conscientious in the discharge

[1] The Licence granted by the Bishop of London to Gibson is lost, but the catalogue of the Gibson MSS. in St. Paul's Cathedral identifies Item No. 67 (Miscellaneous) with this licence and fixes the date as 30th March 1705.

[2] Abbey, *The English Church and its Bishops* (1700–1800), vol. ii, p. 192.

[3] Mr. F. Bryan to Bp. Gibson, 16 June 1744, Fulham MSS., Box, Leeward Islands.

[4] An account of the Religious Society in Gibson's hand, in Wake MSS. CCXLVIII, vol. xv, 'Universities, Charities, Religious Societies' (1715–18).

of his residence at Chichester, living there every year from Midsummer to Michaelmas.[1]

But it was his situation at Lambeth and his relation to the Archbishop which gave him peculiar opportunities of making the acquaintance of the chief men in the Church and in the learned world. Among his friends were numbered Dr. Charlett, who had been his champion from the first, Dr. William Wake, the future Primate, Mr. White Kennet, afterwards Bishop of Peterborough, and more especially Ralph Thoresby, the Yorkshire antiquary, and William Nicolson, Archdeacon of Carlisle. He had met Thoresby in Oxford shortly after the publication of Camden and had formed a favourable impression of him as a 'civil, candid, understanding man' and also 'of extraordinary modesty'.[2] Their common interest in British Antiquities had drawn them together and their acquaintance ripened into cordial friendship. During Gibson's incumbency at Lambeth, Thoresby visited him frequently and discussed with him the improvements in the second edition of Camden. After Gibson had been raised to the see of Lincoln, he had the pleasure of ordaining Ralph Thoresby, the eldest son of his friend, to the curacy of Bugden, where he allowed him the use of the episcopal library,[3] and of presenting him to the living of Rickmansworth after his own translation to London.[4] He also preferred Richard Thoresby, a younger son, to the Rectory of St. Catherine's, Coleman Street.

In contrast to the gentle and retiring Thoresby was the impetuous and bellicose William Nicolson, Archdeacon of Carlisle, who was no sooner out of one conflict than he plunged into another, and whose friendship carried the perpetual danger of being complicated in his many broils. In consequence of the intimacy subsisting between them, Gibson found himself involved in a series of difficulties of his friend's creation. First

[1] Gibson to Charlett, 20 June 1706, Ballard MSS. vi. 59.

[2] Gibson to Tanner, 22 July 1696, Tanner MSS. xxiv. 179. Thoresby's impression of Gibson was more extravagant. He refers to 'the excellent and courteous Mr. Gibson of Queen's, editor of the new Britannia, whom I know not whether more to love or admire, both passions are so extravagant, that when I could scarce hold open my eyes, I yet grudged Nature her due rest.' *Diary*, 30 Jan. 1695, vol. i, p. 303.

[3] Thoresby, *Diary*, ii, p. 298.

[4] Ibid., p. 402.

came the controversy concerning the refusal of Oxford to grant to Nicolson the degree of Doctor of Divinity. On his nomination to the see of Carlisle, the Bishop-Elect took the usual steps to secure a D.D. by diploma from his University. Unfortunately he had crossed swords with Atterbury some time before, on the question of the power of Convocation, and had made short work of his opponent's pretensions to accuracy and learning. The University of Oxford had taken a higher view of Atterbury's writings, however, and had conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Divinity for his services in defence of the clergy; so that when Nicolson applied for a similar favour, a number of Masters of Arts at once signed a protest, urging that his reflections upon his opponent had implied 'a severe and undecent reflection upon the proceedings of the University', which therefore could not accede to his request 'until he should have made suitable satisfaction for so high an indignity and open an affront as he had put upon her'.[1] This protest was communicated by the Vice-Chancellor to Nicolson, who was exceedingly incensed by it. Several conferences of the leading Whig divines were held at Gibson's apartment in the Palace at Lambeth, and at last it was decided to adopt the suggestion of Dr. Richard Bentley, Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, that White Kennet, Gibson, and Nicolson should all take honorary degrees at Cambridge.[2] This could not be done before the consecration, however, which took place at Lambeth on the 14th June 1702, the sermon being preached by Gibson. On the following evening, after dinner, Nicolson prevailed upon the Archbishop to grant his chaplain a Lambeth D.D., and accordingly Gibson was created a Doctor on the 19th inst.[3] Cambridge being quite willing to grant the favour which Oxford had refused, Nicolson, Kennet, and Gibson all proceeded thither, and on the 26th the two first named were admitted to the degree.[4] Owing to the fact that Gibson was not of full standing by the statutes of that University to

[1] *Letters to and from William Nicolson, D.D.*, ed. J. Nichols, London, 1809, vol. i, p. 263.

[2] Bp. Nicolson's *Diary*, 11 June 1702, *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmoreland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society*, vol. ii, 1902, n.s.

[3] Ibid., 15th and 19th June 1702. [4] Ibid., 26th June.

proceed D.D. *ad eundem*, he had to come away without the honour. The entire motive of the incident was party jealousy. The three divines were all aggressive Whigs and Oxford was extravagantly Tory. Nevertheless Gibson's acceptance of a Lambeth doctorate increased the disfavour with which he was regarded in Oxford. In a letter to his friend Dr. Joseph Smith, Fellow, and afterwards Provost of Queen's, he defended both the right of the Archbishop to grant degrees, which several people in Oxford affected to question,[1] and the propriety of his own acceptance of the honour. After the public insult to the Bishop of Carlisle, he could not expect to receive more favourable treatment in his own case, and

'was therefore willing to close with a shorter and nearer way. If it should be an objection that his doing it at that juncture looked like a resentment of the hard usage his lordship of Carlisle had met with, he was not at all displeased that such construction should be put upon it, because he had a very hearty honour for his lordship and would reckon it no compliment to be thought easy under so public an affront offered to his person and character.'[2]

The duel between Nicolson and Atterbury became more furious in 1704 when the promotion of the latter to the Deanery of Carlisle brought them face to face for a further encounter. Upon hearing that his adversary had received this preferment, Nicolson at once determined to pay off old scores, by refusing to institute him unless he first revoked certain propositions relating to the Royal Supremacy, which might seem to be deducible from his Convocation book. It is not necessary to follow the long and tedious story of the squabble, but merely to observe that the Bishop was in constant communication with Gibson on the matter and through him with the Archbishop himself. Indeed the incident is little more than an exercise in party strategy. Atterbury was exceedingly obnoxious to the Whigs, both clerical and lay, but very popular with the Tories, and was supported by the Archbishop of York

[1] e. g. Hearne, *Collections*, iv. 161, declared that he 'did not see wt just ground the Archbishop had to confer degrees and wondered ye universities did not question it'.

[2] Gibson to Dr. J. Smith, 7 Dec. 1702, printed in *Biog. Brit.*, Supplement, p. 65.

and Mr. Secretary Harley. On the other side Nicolson consulted Gibson and Tenison concerning his course of action, and the Primate maintained his part so well as to refuse absolutely to allow Atterbury to wait upon him.[1] At length the Queen intervened and required the Bishop to grant institution, but even this did not put an end to the dispute. Both sides felt it necessary to publish an official defence, Nicolson submitting his apologia to the supervision of Gibson and White Kennet.[2]

Once Atterbury had secured admittance to the Deanery, he obtained a dispensation from residence, and never visited Carlisle again after June 1705. But he was quite as troublesome in absence, as he had been during his short stay there. He did not attend the meetings of the Chapter, but refused to accept their decisions or to allow the Vice-Dean to act for him. In consequence he became involved in a series of disputes with the rest of the Chapter, and a state of confusion ensued which prompted his colleagues to appeal to the Bishop to hold a Visitation and decide the question. Other influences, however, had been at work to induce them to take this step, amongst which that of the Bishop himself was not the least powerful. The actual protestation and appeal, indeed, were drawn up by the familiar and skilful hand of Dr. Gibson,[3] with whom Nicolson took frequent counsel, as he had done before. A second protest, over the names of the Dean and Vice-Dean was then lodged against the right of the Bishop to visit, in which it was claimed that the right of Visitation belonged to the Crown alone, Carlisle Cathedral being a Royal Foundation. This raised an issue of national importance, and was a matter of concern to both Provinces of the Church. Tenison therefor took action, and on the 2nd February 1707/8 issued a letter to his Suffragans, calling their attention to the events which were happening at Carlisle, and observing that the Bishop's action was 'a common cause and of great importance to the Church, which would never be quiet so long as that evil generation of

[1] Bp. Nicolson's *Diary*, 2 Dec. 1704. A full account of the disputes between Nicolson and Atterbury is given in Beeching's *Francis Atterbury* (London, 1909), pp. 130–60.

[2] Bp. Nicolson's *Diary*, 12 Nov. 1704.

[3] Ibid., 15th and 17th Nov. 1705, vol. iii (1903).

men, who made it their business to search into little flaws in antient charters and statutes and to unfix what laudable custom had well fixed,' met with any success'. Accordingly he expressed his readiness to concur with his brethren 'in any proper and legal means, whether by bill or otherwise to make this excellent Church safe in this point, both now and to late posterity'.[1] Before this manifesto was issued, Nicolson had been in frequent communication with Lambeth. On the 26th December 1707 and again on the 31st, he had been at work with Gibson, drawing up a statement of his case, which was submitted to the Archbishop on January 2nd, and by his advice laid before Lord Somers.[2] It was decided to introduce a Bill into Parliament to declare all Henry VIII's Statutes which had been acted on since the Restoration, good and valid in law. On February 2nd, Lord Somers, Nicolson, Gibson and the Archbishop all conferred together at Lambeth, 'where', in the Bishop's words 'the Archbishop's circular letter (on my behalf) and the Bill for the House ag^t. to-morrow were read and approved'.[3] The Bill was introduced into the Lords by Somers on the morrow, and there began a vigorous campaign of canvassing votes by Nicolson and Gibson. On the 4th inst. they 'visitted and secured the Bishops of Norwich and Lincoln',[4] and together drew up a statement of their case,[5] which was left with all the prominent peers. The Archbishop of York 'more frankly than kindly' told his Suffragan that 'he'd oppose his Bill',[6] an act which, when reported to Tenison, caused him to be 'much concern'd at the odd behaviour of his brother of York'.[7] On February 24th, however, the Bill was carried in the Upper House by a majority of 65 votes out of 68. During the period of canvassing the two friends had found it necessary to refresh themselves on divers occasions with 'a single pint at ye Dog' and with dinners at the same rendezvous.[8]

[1] *Letters to and from William Nicolson, D.D.*, ed. John Nichols, vol. ii, p. 365.
[2] Nicolson's *Diary*, 26th and 31st Dec., 2nd Jan. 1707, vol. iv (1904).
[3] Ibid., 2nd Feb. 1707, vol. iv (1904). [4] Ibid., 14th Feb.
[5] Ibid., 17th Feb. [6] Ibid. [7] Ibid., 25th Feb.
[8] Cf. 31st Jan., 'A single pint at Ye Dog, with Dr. Gibson'; 4th Feb., 'a glass with Dr. Gibson at ye Dog'; 14th Feb., 'Dr. Gibson and I dined (as also yesterday) at ye Dog'; 23rd Feb., 'Dinner (at ye Dog) with Dr. Gibson'.

The task of securing a majority in the Commons was more difficult, for in that house the Bill would meet with the opposition of Harley and of 'spit-fire J. Sharp', the Archbishop's son, and furthermore 'the House of Commons differed in Church principles from the Lords almost as much as the Lower from the Upper House of Convocation'.[1] Nicolson enlisted the services of Mr. Peter King 'who assured him of his utmost care in carrying ye Church Bill through ye House of Commons'.[2] and when the Bishop showed a conciliatory spirit by removing the sentence of excommunication which he had passed on Dr. Todd, the Vice-Dean of Carlisle and the chief supporter of Atterbury in the Chapter, the Bill passed the second reading on the 28th by 166 votes to 138. The same evening Nicolson 'had the congratulations of Dr. Gibson', but it was agreed that they must be very careful until the Committee stage was past.[3] On March 1st therefore the Bishop noted in his diary that he had been 'shareing the members for the Church Bill with Dr. Gibson, Dr. Waugh' and others 'at the Dog'.[4] Happily these peaceful measures attained their object, and the Bill went safely through the Committee stage, two amendments proposed by the 'Atterburians' being rejected, so that on the 9th Nicolson held another 'rejoiceing at dinner', with Dr. Kennet, Dr. Gibson, Dr. Waugh, &c.[5] Finally the third reading was taken on the 17th and the Royal assent given on the 20th. The Whigs had secured a triumph over their Tory enemies, and Tenison 'heartily thanked' the Bishop of Carlisle 'for his services to the Church in carrying forward the Bill', which, he said, 'I would [not] have seen miscarry'd for 500 lb.'.[6]

On the evening of the day on which the Queen gave her assent the contending parties effected a moving reconciliation. Nicolson records that the offending Vice-Dean, Dr. Todd,

'declar'd, That he would behave himself dutifully and respectfully to ye Bp. of Carlisle according as ye Canons of ye Church, ye local statutes of ye Cathedral and ye Laws of the Land do require; and

[1] Beeching, *Francis Atterbury*, p. 157.
[2] Nicolson's *Diary*, 25th Feb.
[3] Ibid., 28th Feb.
[4] Ibid., 1st March 1707/8.
[5] Ibid., 9th March.
[6] Ibid., 18th March.

with all readyness do everything y^t^ can be expected by a B^p^ from a dutiful son. And in return ye Bp likewise declar'd, that he would treat Dr. Todd with all ye paternal affection that can be expected from a Bp to one of the members of his Church; and that he will forget and forgive all that has been hitherto taken amiss. Amen Amen.'[1]

The Archbishop of York also expressed the wish 'that their warmth in Ye H. of Lords might be mutually forgotten', and even the Bishop and his Dean were reconciled. This fraternization with the enemy was displeasing to Gibson, 'who' (wrote Nicolson) 'neither approves my visit to my Ld of Y. nor of my easyness to Dr. Todd; but especially execrates all reconciliation w ye Dean.'[2] The episode illustrates the height to which party spirit had risen, and the extent to which the highest dignitaries of the Church were at variance with each other. The disputes between Nicolson and Atterbury, involving both archbishops in the fray, were a reflection of the conflicts of Whigs and Tories, which formed the chief events in Church and State.

Shortly after his appointment as Rector of Lambeth, Gibson had decided to take a wife. On the 20th June 1704 he told Dr. Charlett, that he had 'written very few letters of late, except of one sort to a young gentlewoman who was not his wife yet, but was like to be so in some short time. At present his thoughts were all in oeconomicks, furnishing a little house which he had taken in Lambeth'.[3] The lady of his choice was Margaret Jones, sister and co-heiress with her sister Elizabeth, wife of Dr. Bettesworth the Dean of the Arches, of the Rev. John Jones B.D., Rector of Selattyn in Shropshire, and they were married in July 1704.[4] Their first child, a boy, was born

[1] Nicolson's *Diary*, 20th March.
[2] Ibid., 25th March 1708.
[3] Gibson to Charlett, 20 June 1704, Ballard MSS. vi. 55.
[4] Considerable uncertainty has existed both as to the identity of the lady whom Gibson married and as to the date of their marriage. The bride has been variously described as (*a*) Margaret, sister-in-law of Dr. John Bettesworth, Dean of Arches (*Biog. Brit.*, p. 69), and as (*b*) Sister of Dr. Bettesworth (*D. N. B.*). That the former is accurate is proved by the following administration to the will of Mr. Jones: 'Vicesimo Octavo die emanavit commissio Margaretae Gibson (uxori Edmundi Gibson S. T. P.) et Elizabethae Jones, solute liberis naturalibus et legitimis Johannis Jones, Sacre Theologie Baccalaurii nuper Rectoris de Selattin in Comitatu Salopiae, vidui, defuncti,

in 1705, but died in January 1709,[1] and a daughter was born to them in 1707. Fully occupied by the cares of a numerous family Mrs. Gibson does not seem to have emerged much from the domestic sphere, and she is hardly ever mentioned in her husband's correspondence.

Meanwhile the Convocation Controversy was dragging on, and as it showed no signs of terminating, Gibson began to grow discontented. His friend, Dr. Wake, had become Bishop of Lincoln in 1705; White Kennet had been recently rewarded by the Deanery of Peterborough, but his own services, although more important and laborious, had remained without a corresponding recognition. The sees of Chester and Exeter had been vacant in 1707–8, and on each occasion he had hoped that the shuffle of preferments involved in filling them might deal some suitable promotion into his own hand. When these hopes were disappointed he wrote to Wake, observing that as the Bishop of Chichester was now dying, 'if ye successor, whoever he might be, should quit anything consistent with his circumstances and fit for him to ask' then he wished his lordship to 'set ye wheel a going'. 'Time was when the sweating soe long in the cause of His Grace and ye bishops was thought to have some merit; but now ye war was reckoned at an end, that (like King James' brass money) was no longer sterling'.[2]

habentis, &c., ad administranda bona jura et credita dicti defuncti de bene, &c., juratis' (quoted in *Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological and Natural History Society*, Part I, 2nd Series, vol. viii, p. 63, 1896). The date of the marriage can still be only approximately ascertained. In the letter to Charlett cited above, dated 20th June 1704, Gibson was still unmarried; on 2nd September he mentions to his correspondent that he has entered into 'a new state and a new settlement' (Ballard MSS. vi. 56); and on 10th July 1705 he apologizes for his neglect of his friends, and observes that 'having fulfilled ye Jewish law in attending my wife ye first year, I shall be at liberty to remember my obligations abroad as usual' (ibid., vi. 58). The reference is to Deut. xxiv. 5, 'When a man taketh a new wife, he shall not go out in the host neither shall he be charged with any business; he shall be free at home one year and shall cheer his wife which he hath taken.' The marriage appears to have taken place between 20th June and 10th July 1704. 'The registers of Selattyn were very badly kept during the incumbency of Mr. Jones (1678–1709) and no mention of the marriage is made in them; but we have no record of his (Mr. Jones') marriage, the baptism of his two daughters, nor of the burial of his wife' (*Trans. Salop. Archaeol. Soc.*, p. 63). The Registers of Lambeth Parish Church also contain no record of the marriage.

[1] R. Thoresby, *Diary*, 3rd Feb. 1708/9, vol. ii, p. 35.

[2] Gibson to Wake, 23 April 1709, Wake MSS. CCL, vol. xvii, Miscellaneous Letters and Papers, i (1683–1714).

Wake, in reply, offered to write to some of the great men, and Gibson desired him to do so 'only to request in general that a fellow labourer in ye common cause and a humble servant of their lordships might be in their thoughts if there should be room to consider him'.[1] The request was not unnatural, for at a time when party feeling ran high, the prizes of office were regarded as legitimate objects of ambition.

The expected favour did not come. Instead on the 6th June 1710, Tenison appointed Gibson to the Archdeaconry of Surrey 'a very good one (though not so good as it was generally thought)' and also 'exceedingly convenient'.[2] With this the aspirant had to be contented. He threw himself into his new duties with energy and thoroughness, performing them with such diligence 'as to make not only general but parochial visitations, not usual either in this or other Archdeaconries'.[3] At these visitations he delivered several learned charges, explaining the end of his office and the necessity of its execution, and warning the clergy especially to attend to the repair of their churches and chancels, and to the provision of the requisite ornaments for the performance of divine service. At his parochial visitations he enforced these general instructions with particular injunctions. He made it a 'special part of his care to see that the registers were duly kept in all respects', both because the titles to estates and other legal matters depended on them, and also because it was 'very reproachful to the clergy when registers were exhibited in the Courts of Law with the slovenly figures and entries which were seen in too many parishes'.[4]

The year of his promotion to be Archdeacon witnessed the political landslide which swept away the Whig majority in parliament and installed the Tories in office. From that date until the accession of George I, the defeated party was in virtual exile. Archbishop Tenison ceased to appear at Court and was evidently out of favour with the new Ministry. He was well known as an opponent of the Occasional Conformity

[1] Gibson to Wake, 7 May 1709, ibid.
[2] Gibson to Charlett, 15 June 1710, Ballard MSS. vi. 64.
[3] *Biog. Brit.*, p. 66.
[4] Gibson to Charlett, 13 Aug. 1720, Ballard MSS. vi. 85.

Bill, and his correspondence with the Electress Sophia marked him out as a leading advocate of the Hanoverian succession and therefore an enemy of the present government. Gibson was involved in the eclipse of his party, and his activities during this period were confined to the publication of his *Codex* and of a few occasional sermons. He was outspoken in his criticism of the policy of the Tories, and wished to draw together all the Protestant bodies against the menace of Popery. He protested vigorously against the misleading cry of ' the Church in danger ' and the prostitution of the Church's name ' to be the public cry of a division in the State, and to be tossed about by the worst of men, in the worst part of their conversation in the midst of swearing, revelling and drunkenness '. The Church suffered by the identification of its welfare with the success of that party ' who would not own the Church to be safe, till the State was well nigh undone and Popery at our doors '. The Tories had professed that the victories of the Whigs both in politics at home and in the war abroad increased the danger of the Church, which ' was not confessed to be in perfect safety till we were entered into measures which put an end to our glorious successes and lifted up the head of the common enemy '.[1] In the present circumstances the Whigs could only sound the note of warning, proclaim the danger of the situation and keep a watchful eye steadily fixed upon Hanover.

The years of disfavour enabled Gibson to push forward and publish his great work, the *Codex Juris Ecclesiastici Anglicani*. The researches into ecclesiastical law and history into which he had been drawn by the Convocation Controversy had kindled in him a new interest and he resolved to prosecute his studies in this direction. On the 14th February 1709/10 he wrote to Charlett that he hoped to submit to him shortly ' a specimen of a work which he had long had in his thought ; and which had been for many years the employment of his spare hours, viz. : a Codex Juris Ecclesiastici Anglicani, being the Statutes, Constitutions, Canons, &c. of the Church of

[1] Gibson : A Sermon on ' Religion the best Security to Church and State ', preached at the Assizes held at Kingston in Surrey, 10th March 1714/15.

England at large, and under their proper heads of matter and with a commentary'. Archbishop Tenison, however, thought it prudent before making public announcement of the undertaking 'to lay it before the archbishops and bishops to receive their judgments, and (if they should think fit) their approbation, as to the usefulness of the design to the Church and clergy'.[1] The fact that most of their lordships gave a ready and official support did not produce exactly the desired result. It was felt that a book produced by the Archbishop's chaplain, with the approval of the members of the Upper House of Convocation, might be only another instrument to complete the discomfiture of the lower clergy. At any rate the degree of its service to them seemed hypothetical. In consequence of these rumours, Gibson made an emphatic protest that he did not intend to produce a party book.

'The design is certainly very far from anything of a party,' he wrote to Charlett, 'and I shall take care that nothing of that be seen in the Commentary, which is to consist chiefly of Judicial Determinations, Spiritual and Temporal, and no point that is the subject of our present disputes has received any such determination. So that it would be a great imprudence in me and an injustice to the design, should I go out of my way to make that a party book by notes or comments, the subject of which in its own nature is equally the concern of the clergy in general.'[2]

The suspicions of the clergy were not to be allayed easily, however, and as the work was to be printed by subscription, the comparative lack of support was discouraging to Gibson. Six months later, on the 27th January 1710/11, he wrote again to Charlett,

'I cannot say I have the encouragement I hoped to the *Codex Juris*, which is coldly received and made a party book in many places, notwithstanding the assurances that have been given that everything that may have the face of a party shall be industriously avoided. However, I am not willing the pains I have taken about it should be lost, and do therefore thus far continue my intention

[1] Gibson to Charlett, 14 Feb. 1709/10, Ballard MSS. vi. 62.
[2] Same to same, 15 June 1710, ibid., 64.

to go on, as soon as I find that the generality of the persons who have subscribed their names will upon second thoughts persevere.' [1]

This condition being fulfilled, he announced to Wake on the 31st July 1711, that he thought 'there were subscriptions enow . . . to warrant an impression' so that he had 'resolved to go to press the next winter'.[2] Progress, however, was slow, and the amount of labour involved 'more than his head would well bear'.[3] so that it was not until 1713 that the *Codex* appeared, in two folio volumes, dedicated to Tenison.

The scope of the work is indicated by its sub-title 'The Statutes, Constitutions, Canons, Rubrics and Articles of the Church of England, methodically digested under their proper heads; with a Commentary, historical and juridicial, and with an introductory discourse concerning the present state of the Power, Discipline and Laws of the Church of England'. It was an attempt 'to draw up a comprehensive scheme of the legal duties and rights of the clergy'.[4] In the Preface Gibson indicated the chief sources from which he had drawn his materials, namely, the Acts of Parliament relating to the Church, the Provincial Constitutions passed in Provincial Synods under various Archbishops of Canterbury from Langton in 1222 to Chichely in 1414, the Legatine Constitutions passed by Otto and Ottobonus, the Canons, Articles and Rubrics of the Protestant Reformed Church of England, the Provinciale of Lyndwood and the Commentaries of John de Athon, and the registers of the see of Canterbury and the books of the Reports of Judgements given in Courts of Law, which were evidence of the actual practice in various centuries. The information collected from these authorities was carefully digested, and so arranged as to present a survey of the development of the law in each case, showing 'how the law stood before, and what successive alterations it had undergone, before it arrived at the present state'.[5] This was intended to enable the historian

[1] Same to same, 27 Jan. 1710/11, ibid., 65.
[2] Gibson to Wake, 31 July 1711, Wake MSS. CCL, vol. xvii, Miscellaneous Letters and Papers, i (1683–1714).
[3] Same to same, 26 Feb. 1711/12, ibid.
[4] *Some Account of the Rt. Rev. Dr. Edmund Gibson* (1749), p. 10.
[5] Preface to *Codex* (1st ed.), p. iv.

' to account for every law and the ground of it ', and to assist the practical reformer ' in order to the making of new laws, as oft as designs were afoot to supply the defects of our Constitution in any point '. Wishing to make the *Codex* a complete work, Gibson had included also such laws ' as were not only repealed or obsolete, but the subject matter of which was entirely extinct ', as for example, those relating to Religious Persons and Houses and the Benefit of Clergy and Sanctuary. To the same end he had inserted extracts from the *Reformatio Legum* and from the decrees of foreign Councils ' to facilitate the improvement of this Constitution by suggesting such useful rules of order and discipline as had been established abroad or attempted at home.[1]

The *Codex* was Gibson's *magnum opus*, and also his most characteristic work. It contained a remarkably complete system of ecclesiastical law, and was the product of long and careful study, for he had an aversion to the methods of ' lazy enquirers, who would rather be content to rest in a superficial secondhand knowledge than be at the pains to go to the fountain head for Truth entire and unmixed '.[2] The work had involved a severe physical strain which affected his health for several years. In 1718, two years after his consecration to the see of Lincoln and five years after the publication of the *Codex*, he could still write to Wake that his constitution ' had never recovered the last blow of the *Codex Juris*, nor, he believed, ever would ', and could speak of himself as ' disabled in the service of the Church '.[3] The value of the work is unquestioned. Bishop Stubbs, speaking of the researches into ecclesiastical history of Hody, Kennet, Atterbury, Wake, and Gibson, the very dust of whose writings he accounts to be gold for constitutional purposes, says that ' Gibson stands out more distinctly than any of the others as a great Canonist, and his Codex or Collection of English Church Statutes is still the standard work and treasury of all sorts of such lore '.[4]

[1] Preface to *Codex*, p. xiv. [2] Ibid., p. viii.

[3] Gibson to Wake, 24 May 1718, Wake MSS. CCL, vol. xx, Miscellaneous Letters and Papers, iv.

[4] Stubbs, *Lectures on Medieval and Modern History*, 3rd edition, p. 381, Oxford, 1900.

The clergy were not slow to acknowledge that their suspicions had been unfounded, and to make formal expression of their gratitude to the author. On the 17th March 1713 the Lower House of Convocation voted 'that Dr. Gibson's *Codex Juris Ecclesiastici* be added to the books which the Church of Westminster have been pleased to lend and which lye on the table for the use of this house', and 'that the thanks of this house be given to Dr. Gibson for the usefull paynes he has taken in compiling the learned works intituled *Codex Juris Ecclesiastici*'.[1] At a time when High Church principles were enjoying a marked popularity, a book like the *Codex*, even though proceeding from a Whig, could hardly be other than acceptable. Hearne, however, could not overcome his antipathy to Gibson so far even as to admit that he had heard of the work; to a friend who had mentioned its publication to him he replied, 'I know no such book'.[2]

A later generation knew it only too well, for it became the subject of an acrimonious controversy, in which the author was charged even with high treason. The cause of this tumult was to be found in the introductory discourse 'concerning the present state of the power, discipline and laws of the Church of England'. In this essay Gibson had defended the position that the Spiritual Body was independent of and equal to the Temporal, that the Temporal Courts ought to be restrained from interference with the Ecclesiastical, that the clergy were the proper judges of the degree of assistance which the Church required from the State, and of the means by which that support should be rendered, and that the suppression of vice was the proper function of the Spirituality not of the laity. At the period therefore when he had risen to the situation of adviser to the Government, he was charged with having in this introduction struck a treasonable blow at the constitution of the kingdom by denying that the Church was subordinated to the State. The cry of 'Church Power' was raised against

[1] Thanks of the Lower House of Convocation for the *Codex*, 17 March 1713, Gibson MSS. vii. 21.

[2] Hearne, *Collections*, iii. 478.

him and the *Codex* became the symbol of aspiration to ecclesiastical tyranny.

> But for the standard of New Light
> Consult the C(ode)x day and night
> Which shews the genius of the P(rie)st
> Who like a true Ch(urch) Alchymist
> Can from each caput mortuum squeeze
> Religion's culinary fees.[1]

The temper and hostility aroused were so great that Gibson did not dare to publish to the world the conclusion he had reached, after a thorough consultation of all the extant episcopal registers of the various English and Welsh sees, that ecclesiastical canons were binding on the laity. He composed a treatise on the subject, but 'did not think fit to publish it himself at so advanced an age, much less to defend it if drawn out into controversy'.[2] For the same reasons it was not included in the second edition of the *Codex*, which appeared posthumously in 1761.[3] One result of the notoriety attained by the *Codex* was the invention of the nickname by which its

[1] *Dr. Codex's Fifth Pastoral*, London, T. Cooper, 1734; Bp. Gibson Pamphlets, xv. 16, Sion College; compare a laudatory testimony in *A Congratulatory Poem on the translation of the Rt. Rev. Father in God Edmund, from the See of Lincoln to the See of London*, London, 1724 (B. M. 11631, f. 13):

> For next the sacred Codex claims applause,
> The great defender of the Church's cause,
> The sacred ark in which she keeps her laws
> Our learned Ezra did them all collect
> And laid them here new polished and correct. . .
> For this contains the Laws of great and small
> And has, like Aaron's rod, devour'd them all;
> Each Statute, Canon, Rubric, all we miss
> Or want to see, are all compris'd in this.

[2] *Some Account of the Rt. Rev. Edmund Gibson* (1749), p. 14. Apparently this treatise has been lost, though a few loose papers in St. Paul's Cathedral Library (Box 17, B. 13) seem to have formed part of the original thesis, but are now disconnected and incomplete.

[3] From the time of the publication of the first edition, Gibson had desired to extract from it 'a plain analytical system of English Ecclesiastical Law in the nature of an Institute' for the use of clergy and of ordinands. The multitude of business in which he was engaged, however, prevented him from carrying out this project, but it was undertaken with his approval by Mr. Richard Grey, Rector of Hinton, Northamptonshire, who published in 1730 'A System of English Ecclesiastical Law extracted from the *Codex Juris Ecclesiastici Anglicani*'.

author was generally known. Henceforth Gibson becomes 'Dr. Codex', the proper subject of abuse and witticism from every scribbler. Nor is the title inappropriate. Although devoid of originality and imagination, he was at his best in the patient and minute research which such a publication demanded.

When the *Codex* was printed in 1713, he sent a complimentary copy to the Electress Sophia of Hanover, pointing out to her that 'one head in that book contained the laws against Popery, and another the laws by which the succession to these kingdoms was limited to her heirs, as under God, the greatest security to our Religion and Liberties', and assuring her that 'no subject of Great Britain more cordially wished the honour and enlargement of her illustrious house' than himself.[1] It was to Hanover that the eyes of all zealous Whigs were turned during the last critical months of Anne's reign. When the Queen fell ill they were greatly perturbed 'expecting nothing but confusion and the effusion of much Christian blood before the matter could be brought into the former state, by reason of the absence of the Elector of Brunswick and the dreaded invasion of the Pretender with an army of French and Irish'.[2] The situation was saved by decisive action, George I succeeded peaceably to the throne, and was crowned by Tenison on the 20th October 1714.

The death of the Archbishop on the 14th December 1715 made way for the translation of Wake from Lincoln to Canterbury, and the elevation of Gibson to the episcopate as Bishop of Lincoln. Gibson was nominated to the see of Lincoln on the 17th December 1715, elected on the 1st February 1715/6, confirmed on the 11th, and consecrated by Archbishop Wake and the Bishops of London, Winchester, and Gloucester in Somerset House Chapel on February 12th.[3] He arranged with Wake to hold *in commendam* until the 2nd November 1717 the Rectory of Lambeth, the Precentorship of the Cathedral Church of Chichester and the office of Residentiary in the same Church, together with

[1] Gibson MSS. vii. 9. [2] Thoresby, *Diary*, vol. ii, p. 245.

[3] Register Gibson, Lincoln, p. i; Le Neve, *Fasti Eccl. Anglic.* (ed. Hardy), ii, p. 28, gives the date of the election as 20th January; but the evidence of the Register of Gibson is clear: 'primo die Februarii'.

the Mastership of St. Mary's Hospital, in order to cover the expenses of moving to Lincoln.[1]

The preferments of Wake and Gibson were both Whig appointments and an early opportunity arose of testing their loyalty to the Ministry. The Government were bound to take measures to repay the Dissenters for their steady support of the Hanoverian cause, by relieving them from the disabilities under which they had been placed by the vindictive policy of the Tories. It was evident that the Occasional Conformity and Schism Acts must be repealed, and possible that even more might be offered. In either case, however, the support of the episcopate was essential. Wake had voted against these Acts when they were passed in Queen Anne's reign and the Ministry hoped to be able to rely upon his support and influence with his brethren in favour of repeal. Instead they were confronted by an episcopal rally against the proposed relief. Bishop Nicolson of Carlisle was an active leader of the opposition forces. On the 18th March 1716/17 he informed the King 'that eighteen or nineteen of the bishops would be against repealing the Act against Occasional Conformity' on the ground that it had been 'so lately and unanimously agreed to'.[2] The attitude of Gibson seems to have been somewhat uncertain. Nicolson and six other bishops dined with Lord Chancellor Cowper on the 23rd, who asked 'how their sentiments stood' on this matter and 'was hereupon assured that eighteen in twenty-five (as the King had been told) would be against the repeal, which he easily credited when he found four of them (Carlisle, St. Asaph, Lincoln, and Exeter) were so'.[3] Upon further reflection, however, Gibson seems to have changed his position. Nicolson attempted to ascertain his opinion in the following November, but found him 'very reserved in the whole of their discourse on this subject', and feared that he was slipping away from his former attitude.[4] Some of the bishops, especially Hoadly

[1] Gibson to Wake, 31 Jan. 1715/16, Wake MSS. CCL, vol. xx, Miscellaneous Letters and Papers, iv (1715–18).

[2] Nicolson's *Diary*, 18th March 1716/17, *Transactions Cumberland and Westmoreland Antiq. Society*, vol. v (1905), n.s. [3] Ibid., 23rd March.

[4] Nicolson to Wake, 16 Nov. 1717, Wake MSS. CCL, vol. xx, Miscellaneous Letters and Papers, iv (1715–18).

of Bangor, were willing to go beyond the Occasional Conformity and Schism Acts, and extend the repeal to the Test and Corporation Acts, and Gibson appears now to have inclined towards this more liberal programme. On the 22nd November 1717 he informed Wake that he had joined a conference consisting of Hough of Worcester, Willis of Gloucester, Trimnell of Norwich, Talbot of Sarum, and Chandler of Lichfield, at which 'it appeared to be the sense of the whole company that the more desirable method would be to abolish the Sacramental test so far as it concerned Corporations'.[1] This change of front on the part of Gibson was ascribed by Nicolson to his desire to admit Dissenters into Corporation offices in order 'to prevent the undue returns of members disaffected to the present government'.[2] Negotiations continued between the ministers and the bishops but it was impossible to obtain agreement among the episcopate. Accordingly on the 13th December 1718 Stanhope introduced his Church Bill into the Lords; 'it consisted of three parts; . . the first repealed the obligation of taking the Sacrament upon entering into office [in Corporations], the second took away that clause in the Occasional Conformity Bill which made it penal for one in station to appear at a Conventicle, the third repealed the whole Schism Bill.'[3] The strength of the opposition compelled the promoters to modify their schemes. Lord Sunderland determined to rest content with the repeal of the Occasional Conformity and Schism Acts, and said that the proposal to repeal certain clauses of the Test and Corporation Acts 'had never been part of the Bill unless the Bishops of Gloucester, Lincoln and Bangor had declared they would not appear for the Bill without it'.[4] The defection of Gibson was disconcerting to Wake and Nicolson, and the attitude of the liberal bishops (who were joined by White Kennet of Peterborough) 'caused a variety of discourse' against them. Even in its truncated form, the Bill was opposed by both archbishops. 'The Archbishop of Canterbury spoke most materially against

[1] Gibson to Wake, 22 Nov. 1717, ibid.
[2] Nicolson to Wake, 29 Nov. 1718.
[3] Portland MSS. v. 574.
[4] Ibid.

the Bill, the Bishop of Lincoln for it'.[1] At the third reading Lord Nottingham proposed to add a clause intended to keep out of office persons suspected of Socinian opinions. He was supported by the two archbishops, but opposed by the liberal bishops, including Gibson, and his motion was lost.[2] Finally the Bill was carried by 86 votes to 66 in the Lords and by 243 to 202 in the Commons. Gibson's change of front was ascribed by his friends to the influence of Dr. Thomas Gibson, his uncle.[3] Nevertheless the incident had considerable importance in his career, for it increased the favour of the Ministry towards him, in proportion as the attitude of Wake reacted unfavourably on his position. Gibson had the credit of supporting the cause of toleration and the advantage of securing the gratitude of the Government.

The diocese of Lincoln, over which Gibson was now called to preside, was the largest in England, containing 1,312 parishes, and by consequence had the greatest labour.[4] Its bishops in the past had contrived to keep an unusually large part of their jurisdiction in their own hands, thus increasing the amount of business which they had to transact, and the difficulty of their situation was increased by the distance of their official residence at Buckden from their cathedral city. To these difficulties there was added in the case of Gibson the affliction of ill health, which laid him under a considerable disadvantage in grappling with the problems of so large a diocese. Nevertheless during the six years of his tenure of the See he was diligent and conscientious in the discharge of his duties. He performed the triennial Visitations which the Canons required, visiting the Archdeaconries of Huntingdon and Buckingham from the

[1] Ballard MSS. xxxii. 72. [2] Portland MSS. v. 574.

[3] Nicolson wrote to Wake, 1 Jan. 1718/19, concerning Gibson's conduct, 'his friends here impute the whole of his conduct in the matter to the influence which his old uncle, a bigotted presbyterian physitian, has over him. That gentleman is rich and childless but withal peevish and testy. His nephew must be zealous for anything that he 's pleased to call strengthening the Protestant interest or must run the risk of being struck out of the executorship'. Wake MSS., vol. xxi, Miscellaneous Letters and Papers, v; cf. Portland MSS. vii. 247.

[4] A detailed survey of the diocese is contained in *Speculum Dioeceseos Lincolniensis sub episcopis Gul: Wake et Edm. Gibson*, 1705–23; *Lincoln Record Society*, vol. iv, 1913.

25th June to the 4th July 1717, those of Bedford and the adjacent parts of Buckingham from August 13th to 21st, and those of Lincoln, Leicester and Stow from June 5th to July 2nd of the following year, thus completing the course of his primary Visitation. On his second Visitation, he travelled through the Archdeaconries of Bedford, Buckingham, and Huntingdon from September 1st to 20th 1720, and those of Lincoln, Leicester and Stow from September 5th to 20th of the following year.[1] It was customary at that time to combine the work of Confirmations with that of Visitation, but Gibson determined to separate them in order to give more time and attention to the former. He therefore organized special Confirmation tours. On the 17th May 1718 he wrote to Charlett, that he was about ' to set out on a course of Confirmations at Beaconsfield, Wicomb, and other places in Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire '.[2] He had mapped out his course, intending to call at ' seven places in Buckinghamshire and four in Bedfordshire, in hopes that his repairing to so many places might reduce the numbers to 300 or at most 400 at each place '.[3] Instead he found the numbers of candidates so great and his own constitution so weak that he was compelled to defer the work. At Beaconsfield the candidates numbered seven hundred and at Wendover and Wycombe about the same, so that the bishop, concluding that ' it would be impossible to go on at that rate for eleven days together ', determined to break off and ' to defer the work till he could bring it to a method that might make it practicable and at the same time as general and comprehensive as it certainly ought to be '. Henceforth he endeavoured, by inquiring previously concerning the approximate number of candidates, ' to summon as many neighbouring parishes as would furnish out 400 or thereabouts to some certain place to be confirmed there ' and by this means ' to go on from district to district at the rate of 400 a day '.[4] On the 14th April 1720 he wrote again to Charlett that he was about to set out for Leicestershire ' on purpose to confirm throughout

[1] Register Gibson, Lincoln (Reg. xxxvii), pp. 30, 33, 53, 109, 121.
[2] Gibson to Charlett, 17 May 1718, Ballard MSS. vi. 76.
[3] Gibson to Wake, 24 May 1718, Wake MSS. xx, Miscellaneous, iv (1715–18).
[4] Gibson to Charlett, 31 May 1718, Ballard MSS. vi. 76.

that county and part of Lincolnshire; and, when that was over he would meet his family at Buckden and spend the summer there', after which, in September, he would commence his Visitation, returning to London for the winter.[1] During the six years of his episcopate, Gibson held 60 ordinations, of which 28 were general and 32 special. Every year he held four general ordinations, and the number of special ordinations varied according to the particular circumstances of each case.[2] Fifty of the total of sixty ordinations were held at some church or chapel within the cities of London and Westminster, two in Lincoln Cathedral, seven in the Parish Church at Buckden, and one in that of All Saints, Stamford (in the County of Leicester). The total number of deacons ordained by him was 214, and of priests 235, the great majority of whom were licensed to serve in his diocese.[3] From these statistics it is evident that he was a conscientious and industrious diocesan bishop. The knowledge which he gained from his experiences in this capacity made him an ardent advocate of the project to secure the consecration of suffragan bishops. In the administration of a large diocese he felt the need to be imperative, especially in order to assist the bishop 'in the work of confirmation, which undoubtedly would be a great service to religion, were it thoroughly and constantly performed in all dioceses'.[4] But though he gave the proposal a place in his statesmanlike catalogue of 'things fitt to be done for the Church', he was never able to carry it into effect.[5]

[1] Gibson to Charlett, 14 April 1720, ibid., 84.

[2] Register Gibson, Lincoln (Register, xxxvii). In 1716 the General Ordinations were held on 27 Feb. 1715/16, on 27 May, 23 Sept., and 17 March; in 1717 on 14 July, 22 Sept., 21 Dec., and 9 March; in 1718 on 22 June, 21 Sept., 21 Dec., 22 Feb.; in 1719 on 24 May, 20 Sept., 20 Dec., and 13 March; in 1720 on 12 June, 25 Sept., 18 Dec., and 5 March; in 1721 on 4 June, 10 Sept., 24 Dec., and 18 Feb.; in 1722 on 20 May, 23 Sept., 23 Dec., and 10 March.

[3] Register Gibson, Lincoln (Register, xxxvii); these figures are *exclusive* of the persons ordained by Gibson *ad instantiam* of some other bishop; of the deacons, 10 were ordained on the title of a Fellowship at Cambridge, and 6 are marked as 'sufficienter intitulatum'; of the priests, 3 were in possession of Fellowships, and 5 are marked 'sufficienter intitulatum'. There is no record, beyond the mere names, of the 20 deacons and 12 priests ordained on 23rd December 1722, and none of *one* of the priests ordained on 18th December 1720.

[4] Ballard MSS. vi. 76.

[5] Gibson, 'Things Fitt to be done for the Church', Gibson MSS. vii. 7.

His absorption in the administrative business of his diocese prevented him from mingling in the numerous and clamant host of scribblers who engaged themselves in the profitless Trinitarian and Bangorian controversies. Both these disputes were raging fiercely at this time, but Gibson's relations to both were only indirect. In his second Visitation Charge he dealt at considerable length with the chief points at issue in order 'to lead the younger clergy into further enquiries' into these questions which were agitating the minds of learned divines. Upon the problem of the Trinity he said very little which was new or striking, but contented himself with presenting the usual arguments in a lucid and cogent manner, though his observations gave evidence of considerable Patristic learning and dialectical skill. In regard to the attacks upon Church government and authority which Hoadly had made in his famous sermon,[1] Gibson was treading more familiar ground. He pointed out the weakness of his opponent's position in that it led to unrestrained individualism and destroyed all the bonds of social order. He made an effective appeal to the practice of the Apostles, observing that 'if it sufficiently appeared that they meant to establish churches as societies of Christians', then all the rest, 'a power of admitting, governing and ejecting would follow of course and from the very nature of Society'. Further he defended the position of the Anglican Church, as preserving freedom of individual judgement and yet maintaining the authority necessary for corporate life.

'The principle of the Reformation', he argued, 'was private judgment in opposition to the claim of infallibility in the Church of Rome; and the Church of England effectually preserved and maintained the principle of private judgment, while she utterly disclaimed all pretences to infallibility and presumed not to offer any doctrine or interpretation of her own as an absolute Rule of Faith, but for the ends of order and government only.'

Finally he denounced the practice of Dr. Clarke and his friends, who subscribed to the articles 'in a sense directly contrary to

[1] Hoadly's sermon on 'The Nature of the Kingdom or Church of Christ' was preached before the King on 31st March 1717, and at once created a tremendous sensation.

the express words and tenor of them', as 'not only a practice unwarrantable in itself, as it is contrary to the rules of sincerity and plain dealing' but also one which the governors of the Church could not justly tolerate.[1]

Had Gibson possessed the power he would probably have silenced the combatants swiftly and expeditiously. Under the circumstances he did his utmost by private influence to prevent the spread of the discussions. Four bishops, Nicolson of Carlisle, Lloyd of Lichfield, Blackburne of Exeter, and Gibson met together at the request of the Archbishop of Canterbury to consider the situation and decided to lay before His Grace 'as their humble opinion and advice: (1) that it was highly necessary (at that juncture) that he should more frequently attend the King in person, to prevent misrepresentations: (2) that he should privately call the Bishop of Bangor to him and require him to explain the offensive propositions in his sermon: (3) that His Majesty be humbly addressed to beware of what commands he gave for the printing of sermons: (4) that no business (if it might be avoided) should be entered upon in Convocation till the present jumble was over'.[2] Gibson himself was very much distressed at the spectacle of confusion and controversy. 'The disservice it does the whole Order', he wrote to Wake, 'is so very great that one would hope that the Bishop of Bangor and the rest should be persuaded by their friends to drop it and let it die on that consideration'.[3] He wished 'to see this melancholy scene bury'd in oblivion' and suggested to the Primate that 'some of the great men at Court should be prevailed with to lay their commands on the favourite bishop to put a stop to it'.[4] In particular he was indignant at the excessive favour shown by the Court to Hoadly, and besought Wake to attend more frequently there so that 'if any new mischief were brewing' His Grace 'might have strength

[1] Gibson's Visitation Charge to the Clergy of the Diocese of Lincoln 1720, Egerton MSS. 2073, British Museum; this is the only extant copy of the Charge of 1720, and is written in Gibson's own hand.

[2] Bp. Nicolson's *Diary*, 17 April 1717, *Transactions of Cumberland and Westmoreland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society*, vol. v (1905), n.s.

[3] Gibson to Wake, 13 July 1717, Wake MSS. xx, Miscellaneous, iv (1715–18).

[4] Same to same, 15 July 1717, ibid.

and credit enough to prevent it '.[1] Unfortunately these remonstrances proved ineffectual. The controversy continued to provoke warmth of temper, the combatants on each side showed no disposition to stay their hand, and the Convocation rode hurriedly to its own destruction. There was much ' to make one's heart ache ' as Gibson remarked, but the spirit of controversy was in the air and nothing could suppress it. But although he could not exercise any influence over the Bishop of Bangor, Gibson determined to deal severely with certain of his own clergy who had shown a disposition to meddle in improper discussions. At the meeting of the clergy at the Visitation of Beaconsfield in 1720, it had been decided to send a deputation of two of their number to thank the Earl of Nottingham for a recent book he had published against Whiston. This resolution had been taken without the cognizance of the Bishop, who, when he learned of the matter from the public press, determined at once to put a stop to such proceedings. He dispatched a letter to the two clergymen who had been elected to wait upon the Earl, informing them of

' the irregularity which they and their clergy were committing, and of the danger in which they were involving themselves, by making a public declaration of their opinion on a matter of doctrine, which, as it was a matter wholly foreign to the work of visitations, so, he conceived, as the law then stood could not be done without danger of a Praemunire by any assembly of the clergy whatsoever except by a Convocation of the bishops and clergy legally assembled by the King's Writ and the Mandate of the Metropolitan.'

Further he rebuked them for an action which he thought ' a great indignity to himself and inconsistent with the oath of canonical duty which every incumbent took to his bishop, that a matter of such importance should be attempted and carried on without his direction '.[2] Accordingly he warned them not to proceed further in the irregularity, and the admonition being regarded, the matter dropped.

Meanwhile Gibson's credit was steadily rising with the leading men both of Church and State. Within the Church he was

[1] Same to same, 24 Aug. 1717, ibid.
[2] Gibson to Dr. Wiles and Mr. Tate, 11 May 1721, Gibson MSS. vii. 10.

recognized as the champion of the Tenisonian tradition and it was well known that the archbishop consulted him frequently and paid great attention to his advice.[1] His friendship with Wake, however, was not the most powerful force making towards his further promotion. The soundness of his political principles commended him strongly to the favour of the Ministry. On the one hand his Whig principles were more pronounced and reliable than those of Wake, and on the other his theological and ecclesiastical views were far more representative of the general position of the clergy than those of Hoadly. It became evident that he was marked out for a higher preferment. In 1721 he was appointed Dean of the Chapels Royal, an office which brought him into close connexion with the royal household. In the same year he did good political service to the Ministry by defending their precautionary measures to prevent the outbreak in England of a plague which was raging with peculiar violence in the South of France. The region around Marseilles was suffering terribly from the ravages of the plague, and it was feared that the infection might spread to Great Britain. The Government therefore introduced a Bill

'for the performance of Quarantine for preventing infection, by building pest houses for the reception of infected persons and for ordering trenches or lines to be drawn round any city town or place infected in order to cut off all communication with them. Sufficient guards were to be appointed for preventing escapes and all persons endeavouring to escape without the observance of quarantine were to suffer as felonious convicts.'[2]

This severe Bill was passed into law, but provoked loud outcries. As a result of the petition of the Lord Mayor, on behalf of the City of London, so much of the Act as related to removing persons into pest houses, and to drawing lines round any infected town or city, was repealed. The enemies of the Administration, however, manufactured a great tumult of

[1] Nicolson to Wake (1718) expresses his pleasure that Gibson has been admitted to such a large share of trust by the Primate, Wake MSS. xxi Miscellaneous, v.

[2] J. Nourthouck, *A New History of London* (1773), p. 319.

opposition and protest. Profiting by the unpopularity of the Government owing to the South Sea scandal, they denounced this new Act as destructive of the religious and civil liberties of England, designed to introduce martial law and deliberately copied from the French model in order to prepare the way for an absolutist tyranny. It was in reply to such attacks that Gibson published a short pamphlet entitled '*The causes of the Discontents in relation to the Plague and the Provisions against it, fairly stated and considered*' (1721). His arguments were a refutation of the calumnies of the enemy and a vindication of the action of the Government in taking precautionary measures. The pamphlet was an obvious piece of political propaganda, and a sign of the confidence subsisting between the Ministry and himself. His enemies dismissed it as 'a little scrub pamphlet', but were aware of the significance of its being dispatched in packets 'all over England to be distributed gratis'. 'This is a very mean work that he submits to for his hopes of London' was their verdict.[1] Bishop Robinson of London was in his seventy-first year, and it was expected that the Ministry would translate Gibson when the see became vacant. Gibson being aware of this intention mentioned to them his misgivings 'concerning the mischief of putting things in an unnatural state by advancing him to the see of London', for he foresaw that difficulties would arise and jealousies be aroused among the senior bishops by the promotion of a junior bishop to such a position of importance.[2] Nevertheless it was evident that the intention of the Government was to advance him so soon as the occasion should present itself.

Before that time, however, there occurred the shock of the discovery of the treasonable intrigues of Atterbury. The year 1722 was a period of great anxiety for the Government, for there were whispers everywhere of a Jacobite conspiracy. At length it was decided to proceed against Atterbury. Gibson was appointed a member of the Secret Committee of the House of Lords elected on the 16th March 1723 to inquire into the evidence against the Bishop. This involved him in much extra

[1] Portland MSS. vii. 316.

[2] Gibson MSS. iv. 4.

business, for the question was serious.[1] The report of the Committee was presented on April 23rd and the administration resolved to take extreme action against Atterbury. In the Lords Gibson spoke against him in the debate on the Bill to banish him from the realm. Before this date, however, Gibson had become Bishop of London. He was nominated to the see on April 10th, elected on the 29th, confirmed on May 4th, and enthroned on the 16th.[2] In the same year he was made a member of the Privy Council. In the position of influence to which he was now advanced he had to deal with the extremely critical problem of the disaffection of the Church towards the Hanoverian Dynasty, which had been revealed by the treason of Atterbury.

[1] Thoresby, *Letters of Eminent Men addressed to*, ii, p. 378.
[2] Le Neve, *Fasti Eccl. Anglican.* (ed. Hardy), ii. 305.

IV

THE RECONCILIATION OF CHURCH AND CROWN

THE translation of Bishop Gibson from Lincoln to London had a greater significance than the bestowal of a higher preferment upon one of the most erudite churchmen of the day, or the further advancement of a zealous supporter of the Hanoverian succession. Such honours had been conferred only a few years ago upon Archbishop Wake, and were now seen to be no more than empty titles. Its importance lay rather in the fact that it was an outward and visible sign of the admission of a new partner into the firm of Townshend and Walpole. Henceforth, until his quarrel with the latter in 1736, the Bishop of London was the third subject in the State in point of political consequence, as he was, until his death a decade later, the outstanding and dominant personality of the Episcopal Bench. Since his appointment as Dean of the Chapels Royal in 1721, and more particularly during the recent illness of the Clerk of the Closet, it had been widely surmised that he possessed no small share of the confidence of the Ministry, and now convincing proof was speedily forthcoming of his influence in their secret counsels. During the course of the year 1723, no fewer than nine sees were rendered vacant by death and promotion. On August 4th Bishop Fleetwood of Ely breathed his last, and he was followed on the 15th by Bishop Trimnell of Winchester. Within a week the see of Chichester was vacant in like manner, whilst Rochester was bereft of its pastor by the exile of Atterbury for high treason. It was clear that the colour of the Bench for several years to come would be determined by the Prelate with whom the Government advised at this juncture. This onerous task was pressed by them upon the new Bishop of London. At the time of the deaths of the Bishops of Ely and Winchester, Lords Townshend and Carteret were away at Hanover, in attendance on the King, but both immediately wrote to Gibson

requesting him to forward a list of recommendations. Sir Robert Walpole also, who had stayed behind in London, sent for him to discuss the same question. Accordingly he produced a draft of proposals for the filling of the sees.[1] He advised that Bishop Willis of Salisbury should succeed to Winchester, together with the office of Clerk of the Closet, and that Bishop Hoadly should be translated from Hereford to Salisbury. For the vacancy thus created at Hereford he suggested the elevation to the Episcopate of Canon Egerton of Christ Church. He also thought that the see of Ely would be best filled by the promotion of Bishop Green from Norwich, and that he should be succeeded by Dr. John Leng, both being Cambridge men, and firm to the Protestant succession and the present royal family. He urged that Chichester should be offered to Dr. Waddington, and exerted himself personally to overcome the reluctance of the latter to accept Episcopal Office, whilst upon the occurrence of a vacancy at St. David's in the later months of the year he pressed the claims of his friend and subsequent biographer, Dr. Smallbrooke. Similarly Dr. Bradford was recommended for translation from Carlisle to Rochester, and another friend of Gibson's, Dr. Waugh, to succeed him in the border diocese.[2] Every one of these places was filled in accordance with his nominations, and Lord Townshend sent him a cordial letter of thanks for the assistance which he had given.[3]

The rest of the Episcopate did not fail to understand the significance of these events, and several of the bishops did not receive them with any satisfaction. In point of fact, Gibson

[1] Gibson to Lord Carteret, n.d. Gibson MSS. iv. 7. There is also a copy in Gibson's hand of these suggested promotions in S. P. Dom., Geo. II, B. 148 (undated).

[2] For the promotions of Bishop Bradford and Dr. Waugh, see Gibson to Townshend, 23 May 1723, S. P. Dom., Geo. I, B. 43. For Dr. R. Smallbrooke, ibid., B. 45, 18 Oct. 1723.

[3] See also Sir R. Walpole to Lord Townshend, 18–29 Oct. 1723: 'The Bishop of St. David's being dead, Dr. Smallbrook is thought on by our bishops to succeed him. I shall write of this in form in my public letter but must lett you know the Bishops of London and Exeter are zealously for Smallbrook, but the Bishop of Winchester is for Dr. Sydall, though on Tuesday morning to me he awkwardly consented to Dr. Smallbrook. Pray let Smallbrook be immediately dispatched.' Coxe, *Memoirs of Sir Robert Walpole*, vol. ii, p. 284.

found himself in a situation of extreme delicacy. He was by no means among the senior members of the bench, having only been consecrated to Lincoln seven years before, yet he was now advanced to the most important see in the kingdom, taking precedence next to the two archbishops. The new Bishop of Winchester in particular felt the indignity of his position, in receiving the honorary office of Clerk of the Closet, stripped of all the authority and influence which it had brought to his predecessor.[1] Nor was this all. Gibson, in consequence of his favour with the Government, had clearly eclipsed both the archbishops. The filling of the vacant sees upon his sole representation and without any consultation with Archbishop Wake was clear evidence of the subordination of the latter. Conscious of the difficulties of these circumstances, Gibson strove hard to release himself from the burdens which his friends would put upon him. During the indisposition of the late Clerk of the Closet he had consented to enter into the business of Church administration, and had been willing so to continue during the vacancy of that office. Yet even then he had confined himself at first to the announcement of the deaths of the Bishops of Ely and Winchester to the ministers, without making any suggestions as to their successors, until Walpole sent for him and insisted on hearing his advice before he wrote to Hanover. After the appointment of Willis to Winchester and to be Clerk of the Closet, he had written to Townshend and Carteret in the most pressing manner that the duty of advising the Government might be entrusted to Willis, and that he himself might be excused all further concern in that matter. He had assured them that he had no desire to trespass upon the province of others, that he did not wish his brethren to think him over-forward in meddling in such affairs, that the management of a difficult and laborious diocese would require all his energies and attention; and above all, he begged them

[1] Sir R. Walpole to Lord Townshend, 18–29 Oct. 1723: 'I have forgot whether I told you that the Bishop of London has desired me that the instruments for the Clerk of the Closet and the Almoner may now be dispatched for Winchester and Exeter. He says Winchester must have it at last, and they shall break, and thinks the sooner it is done the better.' Coxe, *Memoirs of Sir R. Walpole*, vol. ii, p. 284.

to remember that 'the conducting himself in such a manner as not to give offence to one or more of his brethren was a nicer part and required greater caution than they might imagine'.[1]

At the same time he submitted to them a scheme of 'Proposals to the Ministry', in which he outlined three possible solutions of the problem of Church administration. In the first place he suggested that full power and confidence should be committed to the new Bishop of Winchester. Both in point of seniority upon the Bench, and in regard to the late precedent for the association of authority with the office of Clerk of the Closet, he seemed to be the most proper person to undertake this responsibility, and, further, it might be reckoned an indignity if he had it not. In this case the Bishop of London and his brother of Exeter would simply sit still. The former could not, in justice to his see, make it a coadjutor to that of Winchester—and here Gibson proceeded to a long recital of the grounds upon which this precedence was founded—whilst the latter, as Lord Almoner and the first of the three Court bishops in title and dignity, could not with propriety become a coadjutor to the Clerk of the Closet. In case this concentration of all authority in the hands of Bishop Willis were not acceptable to the Ministry, a combination of the three leading prelates might be effected. There was a precedent for something of this sort in William III's appointment of a committee to advise him in the disposal of Church preferments. But this expedient did not really provide a satisfactory solution of the difficulties of precedence. If the Bishop of London were to be a member, he must be first of course, and act as such in the execution of the commission granted to it, let who will be Clerk of the Closet. In practical issues also, the weaknesses of a triumvirate were manifest. It would be necessary for the effective dispatch of business that some one member should be the medium of communication between the Committee and the Government, and this would give rise to jealousies and suspicions. Probably, when actual cases of preferment came up for consideration, the result of their differences of opinion

[1] Gibson to Carteret, 4 and 28 Sept. 1723, Gibson MSS. iv. 1 and 4; cf. 'My Case in Relation to the Ministry and the Whigs,' ibid., 32.

would be, either the recommendation of a colourless, safe man, who, if he were offensive to none would be pleasing to none, or the tacit agreement to advance their own friends by turns. The creation of an Ecclesiastical Cabinet would be a greater vassalage and uncertainty for the Ministry than the confiding of all power to a single trusted prelate. There remained, however, one other possibility; that the Crown should make choice of no particular adviser or advisers, thus breaking through the tradition set up by the late Bishop of Winchester as Clerk of the Closet, but should apply to each bishop individually for information concerning the clergy of his particular diocese. This would have the double advantage of extinguishing the office of transactor between the Government and the Bench, and of leaving the former less trammelled and circumscribed in their selection of persons upon whom to confer good preferments.[1]

These proposals were presented to Townshend and Carteret by Gibson with his request that they would grant him release from further trouble on this score. His plea for retirement, however, was entirely contrary to their wishes, nor were his proposals any more acceptable to them. Both Carteret and Townshend in their answers were positive that he could not be excused. The latter in particular assured him that his scruples were entirely without foundation. He reminded Gibson that even during the lifetime of the late Bishop of Winchester he had given many testimonies of his confidence in him, and therefore the new Bishop could not urge a claim of privilege against what had been done and approved under his predecessor. Moreover, Gibson, by his position as Dean of the Chapels Royal, had quite as much claim to the royal favour as the Clerk of the Closet, nor was there any evidence that the duty of recommending persons to His Majesty was attached to that or to any other particular office. Further, it would be construed as an act of great ingratitude and disrespect, if, after the regard which had recently been paid to his nominations by the King, he should refuse his request for

[1] 'Proposals to ye Ministry upon their coming over,' Gibson MSS. iv. 33.

further advice.[1] In brief, it was quite clear that Lord Townshend was neither enamoured of the prospect of a committee for promotions, nor prepared to accept Willis as his coadjutor. He had decided that Gibson was the most suitable prelate for such a position, and he brushed aside all objections of personal inconvenience, or scruples concerning precedence. Accordingly, the Bishop agreed to face resolutely the jealousy of his brethren and the opposition of his Metropolitan, so long as he preserved the support and confidence of the ministers of the Crown.

The chief difficulty of the situation arose inevitably from the passing over of the Primate. The circumstances in which he was 'out of measures' with the Government, and the Bishop of London 'in', were, as the latter rightly observed, novel and unnatural. Yet of the reality of this fact there could be no dispute. The strange inconsistency and contrast of the earlier and later stages of Wake's career have been a perpetual puzzle to the student of ecclesiastical history. Until the time of his elevation to the Archbishopric, he had been one of the most eminent and successful churchmen of the century. But the position which seemed to be the crown of his achievement served only to plunge him into increasing insignificance. 'Capax imperii nisi imperasset.' In part this has been rightly ascribed to a sudden declension of health, yet his eclipse had begun long before the decay of his natural faculties. The real clue to the understanding of his displacement is to be sought rather in the political reasons which promoted the rise of Gibson. From the outset of his archiepiscopate, Wake had been profoundly disappointing. Elected in the hope of his hearty concurrence with the Ministry in their Whig policy, he had developed contrary tendencies almost from the beginning. His opposition to the repeal of the Occasional Conformity Act in 1718 had produced 'a fright of

[1] Townshend to Gibson, 2 and 26 Oct. 1723, Gibson MSS. iv. 3 and 6. Cf. Duke of Newcastle to Lord Townshend, 1 Nov. 1723: 'I have not been wanting in my endeavours to convince the Bishop of London how truly your lordship and Mr. Walpole are friends to him, and how desirous you are in all ecclesiastical affairs of being directed and advised by him. I think it has had its effect and he both thinks of things and persons as we wish.' Coxe, *Memoirs of Sir R. Walpole*, vol. ii, p. 350.

his turning Tory',[1] and had given great dissatisfaction to the Government. Since that time he had become increasingly alienated from them. In Gibson's expressive words, it soon became apparent that he did not intend to follow Tenison's policy but 'to strike out a new one of his own, setting up for a better churchman' than the latter had been.[2] To this end he fell into confidences with Bishop Smallridge, the friend of Atterbury, and had less and less communication with the Whig prelates who adhered to the Tenisonian tradition. It was inevitable that this should lose him the favour of the Whig Administration, and it was on this account that they made choice of Gibson as their ecclesiastical adviser, to the complete exclusion of his spiritual superior. When the Bishop of London accepted the position of responsibility and influence which they offered to him, he fully realized that he could not avoid the watchful jealousy of those whom he had dispossessed, but that he must expect 'to stand deep charged at Lambeth and Chelsea with everything that happened amiss'.[3]

Having decided to undertake the charge, he proceeded straightway to give evidence both of his reforming zeal and of the force of his authority. The most urgent problem was that of the reconciliation of the Church and the Crown. Although a generation had passed since the expulsion of the Stuarts, the majority of the clergy had not yet made their peace with the reigning dynasty. They had been convinced reluctantly that James II was impossible, but their loyalty was not easily transferable to unattractive foreigners, who made no pretence of affection for the Ecclesia Anglicana. It is hardly possible at this distance of time to realize the chilling effect upon the Church of the sudden change from the spontaneous and eager devotion to the Legitimist line, to the sullen and grudging allegiance to the King *de facto*. The number of the lower clergy who had become Non-Jurors was, indeed,

[1] Nicolson to Wake, 29 Nov. 1718, Wake MSS. xxi, vol. v, Misc. Letters and Papers.

[2] 'My Case in Relation to the Ministry and the Whigs,' Gibson MSS. iv. 32.

[3] Gibson to Townshend, 16 Sept. 1724, ibid., No. 15. Winchester House, Chelsea, was the town residence of the bishops of Winchester.

inconsiderable, but the great majority of those who took the oaths did so with inward reservations and without sincerity. Not all the Tory clergy were Jacobites, but many were, and there remained a vast amount of indifference which might easily be rallied to the cause of the Stuarts. On occasion, indeed, the existence of this smouldering hostility became a serious menace to the Hanoverians. The attempt made in 1715 to draw up an episcopal letter condemning the rebellion and expressing loyalty to the Crown ended in a fiasco, because certain of the bishops not only refused to subscribe their names, but publicly declared the grounds of their dissent from it. This spectacle of a divided episcopate was far from consoling to a dynasty which at that moment was exceedingly insecure, but of late a still greater scandal had been brought to light. Atterbury, the idol of the majority of the clergy, had been openly convicted of high treason and sentence of exile had been passed upon him. It is difficult to exaggerate the dismay produced by this revelation. Of the popularity of the accused there could be no doubt. During his trial he was looked upon almost as a martyr, and he received more homage in the Tower than was often paid to the throne.[1] Yet the most popular Bishop of a Church which had been so closely connected with the Crown in the past was discovered in traitorous correspondence against it. The episode revealed both the insecurity of the House of Hanover and the widespread disaffection among the clerical party of which Atterbury was the acknowledged leader.

It was to this situation that Gibson had to address himself. He realized the necessity of winning over the Church to the side of the Government, and of creating that feeling of mutual confidence between them which was essential to the prosperity of both. To attain this end, the Ministry must be prepared to use persuasions and to offer rewards. Unfortunately the

[1] Prints were published exhibiting him behind the bars with a portrait of Archbishop Laud in his hand, which termed him, 'a second Laud Whose Christian courage nothing fears but God'; cf. Pope's lines:

> How pleasing Atterbury's softer hour
> How shin'd the soul unconquered in the Tower.
>
> (*Epilogue to Satires*, Dialogue II, 81–2.)

Whig party had never understood the art of cajoling the clergy. In the times of Archbishop Tenison's dispensation, it had been Gibson's complaint that they did not lay the concerns of the Church sufficiently to heart, but that 'they sacrificed His Grace and his dependents to their friends in the State'.[1] Indeed, as a party, they were distinctly ill at ease in the rôle of Church defenders, but desperate situations demanded desperate remedies. Accordingly they were now prepared to give the Bishop a free hand in his attempt to transform the situation, and to support his schemes with their authority. It must be acknowledged that they could not have made choice of a better person. Having been trained in Tenison's household, Gibson was firmly convinced that the only security for the Protestant religion in England lay in the maintenance of the Hanoverian line, and, remembering how narrowly he himself had escaped the snares of Jacobitism, he was inspired with all the crusading zeal of a convert. It was, however, his distinction to combine with this unwavering loyalty to the State, a dominating passion for efficiency in the Church. Therefore he contrived so to direct his plans for the reconciliation of clergy and Crown as to contribute also to the realization of his ideal of reformation in the Church.

The scheme which he suggested to the Ministry consisted of three distinct and separate items, two of which had relation to the Universities and the other to the parochial clergy. The prominence given to the interest of the seats of learning was a sound stroke of policy. Not only did they constitute an important problem in themselves, for both were distinguished by their strong Jacobite sympathies, but it was vain to attempt to placate the present generation of clergy without ensuring that their successors should be trained in an atmosphere of loyalty. By his scheme Gibson hoped to accomplish both objects, to gain the gratitude and support of Oxford and Cambridge for the House of Hanover, and to make them a seed-ground for the raising of a patriotic clergy. His first proposal was intended to establish a closer connexion between

[1] Gibson to Wake, 1 July 1709, Wake MSS. xvii, Misc. Letters and Papers, i.

the Universities and the Court by the selection of a certain number of Fellows of colleges to be preachers at the Royal Chapel in Whitehall. Ever since his appointment as Dean of the Chapels Royal Gibson had viewed with increasing dissatisfaction and misgiving the method of performing divine service there. To his way of thinking the office of Chaplain to the King was one of great importance. He felt that it was 'of some moment, both in the opinion of the Court and country, whether those who had the honour to be called to that attendance were persons of some figure or of no figure, and of great moment to the honour of the Court whether the sermons preached in the Chapel Royal were lively or low, judicious or injudicious'.[1] The present arrangement was calculated to produce the less desirable result. There were six clergy appointed to preach there in turn, but they received not one penny of salary for it, nor any other consideration whatsoever. Consequently, as they were all possessed of other preferment, they placed their parochial duties before their attendance on the King. They were neither very diligent to appear regularly in person, nor very discriminating in their choice of substitutes, so that His Majesty, his Court, and the polite society of the capital which repaired to the Chapel, were dishonoured by the sermons of divines whose abilities were not brilliant, and whose affection for the Government was occasionally doubtful. Here was a very good case for making a serious attempt 'to put the preaching duty upon a better foot'. On the other hand there were men of great worth and learning in the two Universities, who by their open and zealous adherence to the King's interest had created considerable uneasiness for themselves, and who laboured under the discouragement of being entirely unnoticed by the Government. The inevitable result of this neglect was that the whole body of the King's friends there became lukewarm, and there was nothing to induce any secret sympathizers to come out openly in support of them.

A remedy for both these complaints was suggested in the institution of the Whitehall Preachers. Henceforth the

[1] Gibson to Townshend, 16 Sept. 1724, Gibson MSS. iv. 15.

preaching duty in the Royal Chapel was to be supplied by the selection of twenty-four Fellows of colleges in the two Universities, 'the best scholars and best preachers that could be found among the King's friends there', who should take duty for one month each, one Cambridge and one Oxford divine being appointed for each calendar month. They were to continue in this office until they vacated their Fellowships, or became Chaplains to the King, upon which promotion others duly qualified were to be chosen to succeed them. For their services they were to receive the salary of thirty pounds per annum, ten pounds being calculated as the cost of their journeys to and from London, and the remainder being regarded as a clear honorary gratuity for the great service which they were doing His Majesty in their respective academies. The advantages which Gibson expected from this establishment were considerable. The preachers would feel their position to be one both of honour and profit, adding to their dignity and prestige, whereas a private pension in money might have seemed somewhat degrading and corrupting. Also, the standard of the sermons at the Chapel would be raised. The brightest and most learned preachers would from time to time be brought to the notice of the Court and the bishops, and by the promotion of such to royal chaplaincies or other preferments, the Church would benefit appreciably. But their sound doctrine was not to be spoken only to the ears of the congregation at Whitehall on Sundays, nor their influence to be exercised in London alone. It was hoped that, as a result of their contact with the Court and ministers, they might bring political wisdom to their colleagues in the University common-rooms, and introduce a spirit of sound citizenship among the undergraduates. They were to be taken into the confidence of the Government so that, on their return, they might 'answer objections against the administration, and confute the lies and misrepresentations of the enemy upon their own knowledge and observation'.[1] The proposal commended

[1] Gibson, 'A Proposal, for removing ye complaint that so little notice is taken by ye Government of the King's Friends in ye two Universities; and at ye same time, for supplying a great defect in the preaching duty in His Majesty's Chapel at Whitehall,' Gibson MSS. iv. 34. This paper is printed in full in Appendix A, No. I.

itself at once to the favour of the Ministry, and, since the execution of it did not involve either any consultation with the Parliament, or any negotiations with the Universities, it was speedily accomplished. A notice appeared in the *London Gazette* for the 17th–21st March 1723 announcing the institution of the Whitehall preachers, and fixing Sunday April 5th, Easter Day, for the delivery of the first sermon.[1] The benefaction was received with amused contempt by the Tories of Oxford, who prophesied that it would not 'work the wonders expected from it', since 'no indifferent men, none that would go many though not all lengths, were to be taken notice of in it', but it was reported that 'none must hope for a share but they who were staunch Whigs and openly professed themselves to be so'.[2] Notwithstanding this, 'the booted Apostles'[3] had been set on their way, and the office continued unchanged till 1837, when the number was reduced to two, and since 1890 the appointment has been allowed to lapse entirely. In addition, Gibson expressed the hope that some small prebends in the cathedrals of the old foundation might be given to those King's friends in the Universities who were disqualified for the preaching duties by not having 'a good talent in preaching, or being infirm and not caring to be called up to Whitehall, or not having a voice that would reach ye chapel there, or a manner of speaking that would be reputable'.[4]

This, however, was only the first instalment of a greater bounty which the Government had in store for the Universities. By its nature it was confined to clergy only, and the lay interest needed some other inducement. In a letter to the King about April 1724, Lord Townshend mentioned 'some further encouragements' which he had been 'considering in frequent conversations with the Bishop of London',[5] and which proved to be nothing less than the 'enlightened and far-sighted scheme' for the foundation of a Professorship of Modern

[1] Clark, J. W., *Endowments of the University of Cambridge*, p. 46.
[2] Portland MSS. vii. 377.
[3] Pyle, *Memoirs of a Royal Chaplain*, p. 20; so called because of the amount of riding that was to be done between London and the Universities.
[4] Gibson MSS. iv. 41, 'King's Friends in the Universities.'
[5] Coxe's *Walpole*, ii. 297.

History and Languages in each University. This project in its final form was the result of the joint consultations of Townshend and Gibson, but the credit for its inception undoubtedly belongs to the genius of the latter. In the early days of his settling in London Gibson had expressed his regret to Dr. Charlett that Oxford studies were so divorced from the problems of modern times that they gave little help towards the 'accurate understanding of publick affairs',[1] and consequently the statesmen of the nation were ill-equipped for the discharge of their diplomatic duties. Now, therefore, he attempted to supply this defect by proposing the foundation of a new professorship as part of his scheme for winning over the Universities.[2] In the draft of the project, which he sent to Townshend, this aspect of the question was brought prominently into the foreground. He began by remarking that, since it was the intention of the Universities to furnish a succession of fit persons for the service of God in the State as well as the Church, and since the continual correspondence of the Secretaries of State with foreign courts demanded the knowledge of modern or living languages both in speaking and writing, the failure of the nurseries of learning to meet this

[1] Gibson to Charlett, Ballard MSS. v. 25.

[2] That the idea of the Professorships was due originally to Gibson may be concluded from the following considerations: (1) it was an essential part of his scheme to reconcile the universities and the clergy to the Government: 'My great point was to bring ye body of ye clergy and ye two universities at least to be easy under a Whig administration' ('My Case in Relation to the Whigs'). Since the Whitehall preachers were necessarily clergymen, the scheme was incomplete without this second item, which embraced the interest of the University as a whole. (2) The original draft of the proposal was sent from Gibson to Townshend and not vice versa. There are two extant copies of this: one in Gibson's own hand in the Gibson MSS. iv. 35; the other, a fair copy *not* in his hand, in S. P. Dom. Geo. I, B. 66; to this latter copy is attached the draft of the King's letter to the Universities constituting the Professorship, in Lord Townshend's hand. (3) There are frequent references in the correspondence between the Bishop and the Minister, showing that the two worked together in defining the details, and that the latter would decide nothing without the counsel of the former. (4) The references in Portland MSS. vii. 378 (quoted in the text) express the Oxford opinion that the favours were due to 'the Lambeth Doctor', i. e. Gibson. From these it is reasonable to infer that the 'enlightened and far-sighted scheme' (so called by Goldwin Smith in his inaugural lecture, who inclined to give the credit to Walpole) was first suggested by Gibson as part of his wider purpose, the original draft prepared by him, and the details worked out by the two promoters in their joint consultations.

requirement resulted in His Majesty's ministers and ambassadors being compelled to employ persons of foreign extraction in their service. For the same reason the nobility and gentry of the kingdom had to pay foreign tutors to accompany their sons in their travels. The inconveniences of such a procedure were evident, and it was a matter of concern for the honour of the national universities to vindicate their claim to be the seat of universal learning. By the institution of a Regius Professorship of Modern History and Languages in each University this reproach would be effectually removed. The details of the foundation according to Gibson's suggestion were as follows: Two persons of sober conversation, and proficiency in modern languages were to be fixed in convenient dwellings, in Oxford and Cambridge respectively, to be 'the chief directors' of the study of modern languages and history. They were to instruct gratis, both in speaking and writing these tongues, twenty scholars to be nominated by the Crown, who should have taken the degree of Bachelor of Arts and should be of full four years' standing. Further, the pupils were to be chosen from such as were understood not to be designed for any of the three professions of Divinity, Law, or Physic, in order that they might serve the State in other ways, except that three of the number in each University might be either in Orders or intended for that calling, if they were willing to qualify themselves for chaplaincies to His Majesty's foreign embassies. For the purpose of instructing these scholars, a certain number of assistants were to be allowed to each professor, and his duty was to consist not merely of the superintendence of the work of the masters, but of the personal instruction and examination of each of the students at least once a month, so that he might mark their progress, and correct any remissness or neglect.[1] Along these lines, by their frequent consultations, Townshend and Gibson worked out the details of the final scheme, which was officially announced by the dispatch of a letter from the King to the two Universities,

[1] 'Professorships of Modern History and Languages.' Two copies of this document survive: one in Gibson's hand in Gibson MSS. iv. 35; the other, a fair copy, to which is attached the draft of the Royal Letter to the Universities in Townshend's hand, in S. P. Dom., Geo. I, B. 66.

dated the 16th May 1724.[1] In this, His Majesty referred to the lack of provision for the study of Modern Languages, and announced his gracious intention of appointing two persons 'of sober conversation and prudent conduct, of the degree of Master of Arts or Bachelor of Laws, or of some higher degree' to be Professors of Modern History. Their salary was to be £400 per annum, out of which they were 'to maintain with sufficient salary' at least two assistants. The provision limiting the choice of scholars to those who were not intending to enter any of the three professions, together with that respecting the inclusion of three who were designed for Holy Orders with a view to foreign chaplaincies, were omitted from the revised document. In addition it was required that each scholar should learn at least two languages, that the lectures of the Professors and their tutorial instruction should be so ordered as not to interfere with the hours appointed for academical studies, and that an account of the progress made by each scholar should be transmitted to the principal Secretary of State every year.[2]

Having dispatched this letter, the promoters waited anxiously for reports of the manner of its reception. Both Universities returned a formal answer in addresses dated May 19th. The one from Cambridge was all that could be desired, being full of enthusiasm and gratitude. That of Oxford, on the contrary, was exceedingly disappointing. The letter itself was 'jejeune, and the manner of sending it up, by one of the beadles, disrespectful'.[3] The University seemed to derive the most satisfaction from the regulation 'directing that the hours for teaching His Majesty's scholars be so ordered as not to interfere with those already appointed for their academical studies', and plainly hinted that the defects in its educational system which some pretended to detect were imaginary. By comparison with that from the sister University, this letter was felt to be very unsatisfactory. The Bishop of Bristol, who

[1] The story of the foundation of the Regius Professorships has been carefully worked out by Sir C. H. Firth in his paper on 'Modern History in Oxford, 1724–1841', in the *English Historical Review*, No. CXXV, Jan. 1917.

[2] Clark, J. W., *Endowments of the University of Cambridge*, p. 183.

[3] Boyer, *Political State of Great Britain*, vol. xxviii, p. 479.

was also Dean of Christ Church, wrote to Gibson, that 'upon seeing the Cambridge address and manner of sending it up, in the *Gazette*, they were very much out of countenance', and assured him of his conviction that, despite their 'cold manner of thanking His Majesty', the benefaction would have a good effect in time.[1] Bishop Gibson himself was exceedingly incensed by the ill behaviour of his University. He tried to soften the resentment which such churlish conduct naturally produced by assuring Lord Townshend that the opposition came from a few Heads of Houses only, and that the majority of Masters were cordially in favour of the scheme. Indeed, one of his correspondents had informed him that there had been 'ringing of bells all day on the 28th, and an honourable mention of His Majesty's benefaction in the sermon on ye 29th'. Nevertheless, though a certain degree of artificial enthusiasm had been tardily worked up after the publication of the Cambridge address, the original insult remained. Gibson reported that, as he had proceeded in his Visitation, he had found that 'what His Majesty had done was greatly approved and most honourably spoken of in his diocese, and the University of Oxford blam'd without one word offered in its favour by any one man where he had yet been'.[2] The critical Tories of Oxford, however, were not disposed to be won over either by preachers or professors. They suspected that 'somewhat more than appeared, was aimed at by the great profusion of favours on a sudden', and were even 'so unreasonable as to doubt whether this were a full equivalent to the University for the suit to support the Archbishop's degrees'.[3]

[1] Bp. Bristol to Bp. Gibson, 25 May 1724, S. P. Dom., Geo. I, B. 49.

[2] Gibson to Townshend, 2 June 1724, S. P. Dom., Geo. I, B. 50.

[3] Portland MSS. vii. 378. There had been a recent dispute on the power of the Archbishop to grant degrees. Bp. Gastrell of Chester had refused to admit Samuel Peploe to the Wardenship of Manchester College, because the statutes required that the Warden should be either a B.D. or LL.D., and he refused to recognize the Lambeth degree. After a legal suit the verdict went against him. Gibson was concerned in this dispute, for his degree had been conferred by Archbp. Tenison, so that Hearne called him 'Mr. Gibson, for he did not see what just grounds the Archbp. had to confer degrees' (*Collections*, iv. 161), and also Gastrell had attacked his *Codex* in this connexion. He therefore exerted his influence in favour of Peploe, for whom he subsequently secured the succession to the bishopric of Chester.

Meanwhile the two authors proceeded to consider the drawing up of the Royal Letters Patent, and the choice of professors and of scholars, a task which had been rendered the more difficult by the discouraging reception given to their initial act. Henceforth their maxim was to walk circumspectly. Gibson wrote to the Bishop of Bristol asking him to seek out precedents in connexion with the foundation of previous Regius Professorships, but he could find nothing more than documents concerning additional endowments of chairs which had been established long before.[1] Therefore, with the advice of the Attorney- and Solicitor-General, a new instrument was drawn up and entrusted to Townshend to be passed through the necessary offices. On the 15th September 1724 the latter reported that it had been long out of his hands, but that it was temporarily delayed by the adjournment of the Lords of the Treasury, whose signatures were necessary before it could go to the Privy Seal. He promised that the business 'should be hastened as much as possible',[2] and accordingly on the 28th the Royal Letters Patent were sent to both Universities. They contained a few additional regulations, defining further the details of the foundation, chief amongst which were the appointment of the professors for one year only, with the right to apply for continuance in office, the specification that the salary of the assistants should be £25 per annum, and the modification of the rules with regard to the standing of scholars, two years' residence from matriculation being now required with a further three to be spent in their new studies.[3] Doubtless the limitation of the appointment to one year was due to the hostile attitude of Oxford, and to the natural desire of the Ministry to retain a good measure of control over their new foundation and to prevent its conversion into an honorary sinecure. This same motive also exercised powerful influence

[1] Gibson to Townshend, 27 June 1724, S. P. Dom., Geo. I, B. 50. The documents sent were: 'Augmentatio salarii publici in Theologia Professoris Regii Universitatis Oxon. Rectoria de Newelme, Prebend: Ecclesiae Cathedralis Episcopi Oxon.', 1605; and 'Charta Jacobi Regis de augmentatione Salarii Professorum Regiorum in Medicina et Jurisprudentia', 1617: S. P Dom., Geo. II, B. 149.

[2] Townshend to Gibson, 15 Sept. 1724, Gibson MSS. iv. 19.

[3] Clark, *Endowments of the University of Cambridge*, p. 188.

in the choice of persons for the professorships. Lord Townshend had been strongly pressed in favour of Archdeacon Martin Benson, and Mr. George Stubbs, Fellow of Exeter College, Oxford, and was himself inclined to view their claims with approval. But his colleague had always believed the former to be 'leaning to ye Tories', whilst the latter had been censured before the Vice-Chancellor; and therefore, since their maxim now was 'to set out in the best and most unexceptionable way possible', he was rejected as 'one who had a mark set upon him and who would be liable to reflections on that account'.[1] Finally their choice fell upon Mr. David Gregory of Christ Church, who was only twenty-eight years of age, and Mr. Samuel Harris of Peterhouse. Both were duly presented to His Majesty on August 22nd,[2] and proceeded to their respective Universities for formal admission into their office. In both places the appointment of the professor for the space of only one year aroused unfavourable comment. Dr. Stratford observed that the Government 'were resolved to keep Gregory to his good behaviour',[3] whilst Professor Harris informed Lord Townshend that the Vice-Chancellor 'after the surprise of his Lordship's letter, so full of goodness to the University . . . felt a second surprise at the shortness of his term in His Majesty's new institution'. Harris had assured him, however, of the fitness of this arrangement, observing in prophetic words, 'that it could by no means be reasonable that a professor should be left at liberty to convert into a sinecure a design of so much consequence'.[4] Despite this, both professors were admitted in an honourable manner on October 26th, and the Vice-Chancellors took occasion to express their cordial thanks to the King for his gracious benefaction.[5] Oxford repaired its former omission, by sending up a formal

[1] Gibson to Townshend, 2 June 1724; Townshend to Gibson, 4 June 1724: S. P. Dom., Geo. I, B. 50. Benson was appointed Archdeacon of Berkshire in 1721. Mr. Stubbs's censure is mentioned in Hearne, *Collections*, vii. 329.

[2] *London Gazette*, No. 6296, 18–22 Aug. 1724.

[3] Portland MSS. vii. 387.

[4] Harris to Townshend, 27 Oct. 1724, S. P. Dom., Geo. I, B. 53.

[5] Harris to Townshend, 27 Oct. 1724; Gregory to Townshend, 26 Oct.; Dr. Snape to Townshend, 27 Oct.; Dr. J. Mather to Townshend, 27 Oct.: S. P. Dom., Geo. I, B. 53.

deputation, which was received by His Majesty on November 8th, presented an address brimful of loyalty, and was royally entertained by Townshend.

The Government seemed to have secured the capitulation of the last two garrisons in England which had held out for the Pretender; and in order to complete the success of the scheme there remained only the nomination of the scholars. This of course was a matter of the greatest importance. Gibson was convinced that from an educational point of view 'the success of the whole affair would depend on choosing without favour the best and brightest youths that the two universities afforded',[1] and promised his cordial assistance in drawing up the list; whilst his partner advocated the inclusion of students 'who had a good skill in ancient learning and languages and a brightness of genius not to hide their talents and thereby render their proficiency useless to the world'.[2] Accordingly a careful selection of fifteen scholars for each University was made early in 1725, and the remaining five were added on the 21st May 1725 at Cambridge and on the 21st January 1726 at Oxford. With the full complement of students thus made up, whose nomination continued for three years, and with the professors settled in their offices, there seemed good prospect that the scheme would go forward satisfactorily without the exercise of constant supervision. At this juncture therefore Gibson detached himself from its oversight, leaving the politicians to attend to the formal duties of the renewal of the professors' appointments, and the nomination of a further batch of scholars when the proper season arrived. Hitherto he had given unsparingly of his time and energy towards the successful inauguration of his cherished project, but for the future he 'avoided to intermeddle' in the matter, referring all applications which were sent to him on behalf of would-be scholars to the Secretaries of State, and leaving them to deal with any small administrative points as they arose.[3] Unfortunately his withdrawal removed the driving force, and the

[1] Gibson to Townshend, 16 Sept. 1724, Gibson MSS. iv. 15.
[2] Townshend to Gibson, 15 Sept. 1724, Gibson MSS. iv. 19.
[3] Gibson to Townshend, 29 Nov. 1727, S. P. Dom., Geo. II, B. 4.

Ministers, no longer stimulated by his enthusiasm, soon allowed the entire affair to collapse.

For the first three years all went well. The reports of the professors in 1725 and 1726 were quite satisfactory on the whole. The majority of their scholars were applying themselves diligently to their task, except that the two Oxford men who were intending to take Orders had applied themselves to Church History rather than to Modern History and Languages, regarding the latter only 'as the ornamental part of their studies'.[1] Accordingly both Harris and Gregory were reappointed, and a few more scholars were nominated in the course of the year 1726 to supply vacancies created by the death of some, and the promotion of others in the civil service. Already there were signs of abuses creeping in. It was only natural that the prospect of securing the favour of the principal Secretary of State and a place in diplomatic embassies for their sons should inspire the nobility and gentry to press hard for their inclusion in the list of scholars. The Ministers received applications for such favours from all quarters. But the quality of the candidates was not always so high as their social status. Professor Gregory was compelled to remind Lord Townshend in 1726 that 'several gentlemen had been put upon His Majesty's institution who had neither any inclination to the study of history and languages, nor any genius to make any advancement in them, though otherwise in all respects gentlemen of good characters'. For his own part he was not in any degree surprised that 'the friends of young gentlemen were desirous of having their sons or relations upon so honourable an institution, especially as it gave them so favourable an opportunity of being taken notice of by his lordship, but if a genius and a proper application were wanting in the persons themselves, they would do little credit to His Majesty's benefaction'.[2] In his third and last report, of the 9th November 1727,[3] he presented a review of the progress of

[1] The reports of 26 Oct. 1725 and 3 April 1727, from Harris, and those of 28 Oct. 1725 and 3 Nov. 1726, from Gregory, were printed in the *Cambridge Review* for 25 Nov. and 9 Dec. 1897, by Mr. Oscar Browning, from documents in S. P. Dom., Geo. I, B. 58, 59, 63, 64.

[2] Gregory to Townshend, 21 Aug. 1726, S. P. Dom., Geo. I, B. 62.

[3] Gregory to Townshend, 9 Nov. 1727, S. P. Dom., Geo. II, B. 4.

the first twenty scholars who had been appointed at the outset. Of these, three had secured places in the service of the Crown, two had been preferred to livings, one had died, and one left the University without any definite appointment. The majority of those who still remained had brought credit upon themselves and the institution by their industry and ability. Tottie of Worcester College was again selected for special commendation as having 'a particular, happy genius for languages'.[1] Three only received an adverse criticism. 'Henry Reynell of New College from the beginning gave up all thoughts of applying himself either to History or Languages, being altogether intent on the University and college exercises; John Whistler of Magdalen Hall could never be persuaded to apply himself to any language', whilst Capel Hanbury of Christ Church who had been appointed in 1726, 'had been absent so much since his nomination', that Gregory 'could give not the least account of him'. As the three years for which the first twenty scholars were elected would terminate in the following February he suggested that the Ministry should consider the selection of a further batch. This report was submitted to Gibson for his opinion, though he had ceased to be responsible for the working of the scheme, and he replied that he thought it 'a very good one in the main, showing the great benefit and usefulness of the institution'. He added that the account which was given of the three defaulters 'might very well warrant a special direction to the two professors to discharge such scholars as did not attend, an admonition having been given first to them and notice of their neglect to the Secretaries of State, (for) it was by no means right that those who would not attend should keep out others that would'. As a preliminary measure of reform it might be well to defer all new nominations until February, so that in the meantime due inquiry could be made into the characters of the persons recommended, and only unexceptionable candidates chosen.[2]

The Ministry did not act upon either suggestion. On the

[1] He had been specially commended in Gregory's previous reports; see the *Cambridge Review*, in loc. cit.

[2] Gibson to Townshend, 29 Nov. 1727, S. P. Dom., Geo. II, B. 4.

contrary, they allowed the entire institution to sink into decay. The month of February came and passed, but no new nominations of scholars were made. Gregory wrote again in the following May that he had only two pupils left, 'Thomas Warren of Balliol College who was a very good scholar', and William Lowth of Magdalen College, who in all probability would be of great credit to the institution. The original fifteen had completed their term and had left the University, and of the five who were appointed on the 31st January 1725/6, only Warren remained. Therefore he suggested that the vacancies should be filled, but to him also the Government paid no heed. On the 13th April 1728 George II issued letters patent confirming his father's foundations, and ordering that the appointment of the professors should continue during the royal pleasure. With the disappearance of the scholars and the establishment of the security of their office the professors ceased to deliver lectures or to teach. Gregory accepted a Canonry of Christ Church in 1736 and resigned his professorship. He was succeeded by William Holmes, President of St. John's,[1] who expressed his desire also to exchange this position for a canonry, for 'as no one was more desirous of rendring that His Majesty's benefaction to the University effectual, so there were few less capable of doing it than himself, and he would therefore be very glad of delivering it into another hand'.[2] Louis Baillardeau, who had been one of Gregory's assistants, retired to Bath with a pension. Similarly at Cambridge, Samuel Harris died on the 21st December 1733, and two years later, in May 1735, Mr. Shallett Turner was appointed to succeed him.[3] About this time an attempt was made to revive the institution. Communications were addressed by the Government to the two new professors. Turner replied that 'it was above seven years since the last list of King's scholars was made, so that the whole might be filled' at their pleasure, and he presumed that all the documents and forms relating to their nomination would be found in the Secretary's

[1] *Gent. Mag.*, 1736, pp. 233, 356.
[2] Holmes to the Duke of Newcastle, 16 Oct. 1736, S. P. Dom., Geo. II, B. 39.
[3] *Gent. Mag.*, 1733, p. 663; 1735, p. 277.

office.[1] Holmes had an interview with the Duke of Newcastle and drew up a list of fourteen names of gentlemen whom his lordship had accepted, together with four more whom he recommended for consideration.[2] Louis Baillardeau was commanded to return to Oxford, but sent a pathetic letter in his native tongue declaring that his advanced age—he was eighty years old—and infirmities made it quite impossible for him to attempt the journey, and imploring the Ministry not to deprive him of his pension, without which he would speedily die.[3] Several forms of nomination were actually drawn up,[4] and there seemed a prospect that the early promise of the foundation would be fulfilled. But all these activities ended in smoke. The selection of scholars was never carried further, and the professors returned to the undisturbed enjoyment of their repose.

The reasons which led to the virtual failure of Gibson's cherished scheme are not far to seek. Once his enthusiastic and energetic personality had been withdrawn, the zeal of the politicians for education soon evaporated. Young men ceased to offer themselves for the new studies, when the tempting bait of promotion in the civil service was removed. Professors, deprived of their students and therefore relieved of their duties, proceeded to thwart the intentions of the founders by 'converting into sinecures a design of so much consequence, planned . . . for the present and future advantage of the Kingdom'.[5] Nevertheless, the design itself was altogether commendable. It represented a much-needed addition to the curriculum of the Universities. There was an impressive body of opinion at that time which held that 'since the Latin language had ceased to be the general language of business and of the histories which delivered down the material transactions of modern times', the seats of learning were falling short of their national vocation in the education of the young gentry for the service

[1] Turner to Mr. A. Stone, 12 Sept. 1735, S. P. Dom., Geo. II, B. 36.
[2] Holmes to Mr. A. Stone, 3 Feb. 1736/7, ibid., B. 40.
[3] Baillardeau to Stone, 18 Sept. 1736, ibid., B. 39.
[4] Two identical forms of nomination are preserved in S. P. Dom., Geo. II, B. 35 and 36.
[5] Harris to Townshend, 27 Oct. 1724, S. P. Dom., Geo. I, B. 53, *supra*, p. 100.

of the State.[1] Professor Gregory was a trifle more emphatic when he expressed his judgement to Lord Townshend that 'the methods of education in the two universities had been in some measure defective since they were obliged to adhere so much to the rules laid down by their forefathers', and that 'the old scholastic learning had been for some time despised, but not altogether exploded because nothing had been substituted in its place'.[2] It was the aim of Gibson's foundation of Regius Professorships of Modern Languages and History to remedy this defect. His project was wise and statesman-like. Though his good intentions were frustrated in part by the lukewarmness of his colleagues, it was given to him not only to establish the study of Modern History in the Universities, but to stamp upon it the impress of his own practical purpose. Of the nature of that purpose there can be no doubt. 'There was no idea of founding a school of historical erudition and research. Samuel Harris in his inaugural address specially told his pupils that they were not to fear lest they should be employed in obscure annals of forgotten years, or in the dust of ancient tomes.[3] They were not to be condemned to so sterile and unfruitful a task. "Alia vobis tenenda est semita, nobilior vos manet labor. Vestrum est per quos viros quibusque artibus domi militiaeque et partum et auctum sit hoc Imperium in primis cognoscere." The Regius Professor of Modern History was intended to train not scholars but statesmen.'[4] In two respects, however, the scheme had been completely successful. During the brief period of its active administration, it had justified itself as an educational experiment. Despite 'the many artifices made use of by some people to discourage any sort of study which came immediately recommended from the throne', it had attracted 'the generality

[1] Bp. Hooper to Gibson, 27 May 1724, Gibson MSS. iv. 36.

[2] Gregory to Townshend, 24 May 1728, S. P. Dom., Geo. II, B. 6.

[3] *The Post Boy*, of Thursday, 22 July, to Saturday 24 July 1725, announced that this address, delivered at the end of the last term, was to be printed because it 'so fully answer'd the opinions and expectations which every one had of that every way ingenious and curious traveller and (was) so full of the handsomest gratitude to the Royal Founder'.

[4] Oscar Browning, 'King's Scholars in Modern History and Modern Languages', in the *Cambridge Review*, 9 Dec. 1897.

of the young gentlemen of distinction' then at the Universities, and they had applied themselves with such industry to the new studies as to bring credit both upon the institution and themselves.[1] Also, it had achieved its narrower and more immediate object. The learned corporations were gradually settling down to a steady and firm loyalty to the House of Hanover, and Gibson himself lived to see the reward of his labours in this regard, when, at the time of the rebellion of 1745, Cambridge formed a loyal Association for the defence of the King, and Oxford sent up an address, which was deemed 'the best and properest that ever came from that place'.[2] Gibson's association with the foundation of the Professorships of Modern History and Language would of itself assure his name of an abiding and grateful remembrance, as a patron of learning, and a benefactor of the State.

There remained the more difficult problem of the pacification of the present generation of clergy, who had been bred up in disaffection and could not conceal their preference for the days of the High-Church reaction under Anne. In their case the only policy which promised any measure of success was the offer of tangible rewards for acts of fidelity to the Crown, thus convincing them that their interest lay in supporting the present establishment. Marks of favour must be conferred upon those who had proved themselves consistent Whigs, and evidence must be given of the Government's intention to extend their recognition to new converts. By such means the clergy would realize that the Hanoverians wished to be gracious to them, if they on their part could be reconciled to the Revolution settlement. This policy involved the reconsideration of the existing method of bestowing ecclesiastical preferments, and here the path to reform was blocked by the anomaly of private patronage. In his zeal for reform and efficiency Gibson inevitably strove to concentrate the power of promotion in his own hands, and there were not lacking strong arguments to enforce his demand. The abuses of the present system were manifest to him. The patronage of the Crown was eagerly

[1] Gregory to Townshend, 24 May 1728, S. P. Dom., Geo. II, B. 68.
[2] Gregory to Townshend, 17 Sept. 1745, S. P. Dom., Geo. II, B. 68.

sought after, and ministers were overwhelmed with applications for every conceivable appointment. Often they multiplied promises for the same thing; almost invariably they paid regard 'to the merits and figure of the person recommending, without duly weighing the merits of the person recommended'; and occasionally they granted requests which could only be called improper. They rarely took time for mature consideration, so that their decisions were attended by all the inconveniencies of haste and surprise. That evils and abuses should result from this system, or lack of it, was not surprising. The Church suffered dishonour by 'the preferring ill men, or persons of mean figure, or persons disaffected and the like', and the clergy who were worthy of advancement but lacked powerful interest were discouraged by seeing such men set over their heads. Nor was such treatment just to those bishops who were the advisers of the Government. They had to bear the chief part of the vexation and censure when benefices were disposed of improperly, without having been so much as consulted or given the opportunity to express their dissent. They were exposed to the reproaches of their brethren 'who might think themselves too much neglected in those deliberations', and had therefore 'an equitable right to be heard before any resolution was taken or promise made'.[1] From the standpoint of efficiency, the Church might well urge that a good case had been made out for reform. But at the present critical juncture, the argument was doubly strong. For it was precisely this uncertain method of dispensing ecclesiastical preferments which was responsible for the continued alienation of the clergy. If the question were asked, why, after the lapse of thirty-six years from the Revolution, they were not more attached to the interest of the Protestant succession and the Royal Family, Gibson had a ready and unequivocal answer; because the promotions in the gift of the Crown 'had not been so ordered, and disposed of in such a way, as to create a general dependence and raise a general expectation amongst the clergy, but had been bestowed uncertainly, and as it were by chance, and had been understood to

[1] Gibson, 'Recommending to Promotions', Gibson MSS. iv. 37a

fall only to the share of the favourites of the particular persons in power and office, and by consequence had had no influence, nor raised any expectation, except in such favourites only'. The generality of the clergy were therefore still apathetic and indifferent. So few of their number could hope to be included in these favours, that the bestowal of them had little or no influence towards engaging them in the interest of the Government. Even those who had shown their affection to it on all occasions were discouraged when they saw themselves passed over in favour of less worthy men. They felt that a double offence had been done to them because they 'had not only been overlooked, but, which was worse, overlooked for the sake of persons of much lower figure and character than themselves'. Many of those who had been so advanced were recommended because of the private obligations of the nobility and gentry, who often employed their influence in favour of clergy not personally known to them. Consequently there had been not a few well-authenticated instances of the promotion to Crown benefices of persons 'who were enemies to the Government', and who had afterwards 'discovered their disaffection in elections and on other occasions'.[1]

Gibson was determined to put an end to these scandals, and to use the livings in the gift of the Crown to create a solid body of clerical opinion cordially attached to the present administration. To carry out this project, however, involved the laying of sacrilegious hands upon the Lord Chancellor's prerogatives. Of the seven hundred and seventy-seven Crown benefices, only sixty-five were vested in the King personally, thirty-six were attached to the Duchy of Lancaster, whilst the remaining six hundred and seventy-six were monopolized by the Lord Chancellor.[2] His claim was founded originally upon practice, which had received parliamentary recognition in the fourth year of Edward III by a statute which gave to the Lord Chancellor the right of presentation to all livings of 20 marks and under

[1] Gibson, 'Promotions by Dioceses', Gibson MSS. iv. 37b. A duplicate is preserved, not in Gibson's hand, in S. P. Dom., Geo. I, B. 68. This item is printed in Appendix B, No. I.

[2] Gibson, 'Matters to be considered in relation to the Benefices in ye gift of ye Crown', Gibson MSS., Miscellaneous, No. 114.

which were rated in the King's books, but limited his choice of persons to 'the clerks of Chancery, of the Exchequer, and of both Benches'. At that time, of course, the Chancellors themselves were generally ecclesiastics, often archbishops or bishops, and their clerks were mainly in Orders too. But now conditions were entirely different. The Chancellors themselves were laymen and so were their clerks, so that all the original reasons for committing the care of ecclesiastical benefices to them were no longer operative. Since also the restriction placed by the statute upon the class of persons who were eligible for these promotions was now by long custom discontinued, the Lord Chancellors preferred their own friends or dependents. The Crown therefore received no benefit from these favours, but might conceivably suffer great prejudice, if any occupant of that high office should use them to raise up a personal following hostile to the Court. This hypothetical danger, together with the urgency of the present situation and the weakness of the traditional argument for the privileges of the Chancellor, emboldened Gibson to produce a scheme which not only transferred all these benefices to the presentation of the Sovereign personally, but also reorganized the distribution of them, through his hands, with a view to the public service and the interests of the clergy.

Gibson proposed that henceforth

'the parochial livings in the gift of the King, the Lord Chancellor and the Chancellor of the Duchy, which were not given to the Chaplains in Ordinary of the King, or to the domestic Chaplains of the said Chancellors respectively, should be bestowed upon clergymen officiating at the time when the vacancy happened, by virtue of institution or licence, within the Diocese to which such benefice belonged, or to such persons in the two universities as were natives of the diocese and were in Holy Orders at the time when the vacancy happened.'[1]

At first sight this might seem to impose an unnecessary restriction upon the Crown. It might have seemed sufficient for the King to absorb the patronage of the Chancellor, with

[1] Gibson, 'Promotions by Dioceses', Gibson MSS. iv. 37b.

the distinct intention, of course, of utilizing it for the encouragement of the loyal clergy, without confining his choice to those of them who were actually serving in the diocese to which any particular living belonged. But this limitation was of the very essence of Gibson's plan. The actual bestowal of a particular benefice upon an individual clergyman only affected the recipient himself, and did not raise any general feeling of gratitude to the Government. What was really important in this proposal was that it did furnish the clergy of every diocese with the expectation of something directly and immediately within their view. They knew that all the Crown livings within the diocese were appropriated to them, and that they were secured against the inroads of foreign competitors. Therefore they would naturally be grateful to the Government which had paid such regard to their interests.

Gibson's scheme was well adapted to achieve its object. His insistence upon the distribution of preferments by dioceses proceeded from his clear perception of the fact that it would encourage the clergy to regard the livings within their diocese as their own property, and even deliberately to exert themselves to obtain any particular benefice or benefices which they coveted; whereas, under the existing system, a vacancy created 'no more expectation among the clergy of the diocese or even the neighbourhood, than if it were a hundred mile off and in any other diocese in England'. From such a practical measure many good results would follow. The clergy, with the hope of a definite reward before their eyes, would spare no pains to demonstrate their loyalty before the local nobility and gentry whom they knew to be well affected to the Administration, and before their bishop. Since the latter would be consulted by the Ministry, when livings within his diocese fell vacant, he would by this means also obtain a greater influence and control over his clergy. Similarly, after the promotion of a particular person, the bishop would still be able to have him under supervision, and to see that his future political behaviour corresponded with the demeanour adopted to gain the favour. Upon the younger clergy especially the scheme would exert a steadying and a sobering influence.

They were usually the most energetic critics of the Government, both in the Universities and in their curacies, but now they would moderate their zeal in the hope of securing promotion. Their conversion, indeed, might be still further accelerated if some of the smaller benefices in the gift of the Crown, which were very numerous and which, though small, were certain, and thus more desirable than curacies, were bestowed upon them early as an earnest of future favours. As for the objections which would naturally come from the side of the dispossessed Chancellor, they might be met by urging the manifest advantages which the reform would bring to the King's interest, to which all private concerns should be subordinated, and by observing that the prebends of Norwich, Rochester, Gloucester, and Bristol, with the right of providing for his domestic chaplains, were still left to him.[1]

Such was the reform of patronage proposed by Gibson. It was not entirely without precedent. In the later years of Queen Anne's reign Lord Chancellor Cowper had laid before the Queen a list of all persons whom he recommended to benefices, that she might be satisfied they were good churchmen,[2] an arrangement which virtually transferred the patronage of his office to her. A decade after the death of Gibson also, the Duke of Newcastle found the pressure of applicants for favours so heavy that he made a kind of bargain with the Chancellor that he should dispose of most of the preferments of the latter.[3] The present project, however, differed from these in that it was the direction of the Crown patronage to serve the public interest in a definite way, and that it had a much larger scope. For it was hoped that the bishops, at any rate the majority who were supporters of the Administration, would for that reason and in order to encourage their own clergy come voluntarily under the limitations proposed in the disposal of their own benefices. Pressed forward by the enthusiasm and energy of its author, the scheme obtained

[1] Gibson, 'Promotions by Dioceses', Gibson MSS. iv. 37b; Gibson to Townshend, 7 July 1725, ibid., No. 39.

[2] Diary of Lord Chancellor King, printed as Appendix to his *Life of John Locke*, vol. ii, p. 47.

[3] Pyle, *Memoirs of a Royal Chaplain* (ed. Hartshorne), p. 218.

the approval of the Ministry and the acquiescence of Lord Macclesfield, the Chancellor. Accordingly, the King issued an Order on the 6th May 1724 authorizing the reform, which he sent to the archbishops and bishops individually, and which they communicated formally to their clergy at public Visitations and the like. It began by expressing His Majesty's desire that 'in the disposal of ecclesiastical promotions, a just regard should be had to the clergy in all parts of the nation, who were persons of good learning, and sober conversation and of known affection and zeal for his Government', and proceeded to declare the details of the plan adopted, which were substantially the same as those of Gibson's original draft. All appointments made in accordance with this Order were to be registered in the office of the Secretaries of State, and notice was given that 'the Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain, upon His Majesty's recommendation, was determined to observe the same rule in the disposal of such benefices with cure of souls, belonging to the Crown, the patronage whereof belonged to his Lordship's office'.[1]

With such a general acceptance of his scheme, Gibson might well rejoice in its favourable prospects of success. The Whigs had made a very high bid to win over all the reasonable and moderate clergy to their side. But the reorganization of promotions did not endure long. It was evidently open to attack from many sides. The chief opposition sprang from the quarter whence it could most naturally have been expected, namely, the dispossessed patron of six-sevenths of the livings which were nominally in the gift of the Crown. The complaisant Macclesfield resigned the seals on the 4th January 1724–5, being threatened with an impeachment for malversation, and on June 1st Peter King received them in his stead. The new Chancellor was by no means inclined to accept the conditions under which his predecessor had worked. Immediately after delivering to him the insignia of his office the King had set out for Hanover accompanied by Lord Townshend, but Sir

[1] A copy of the King's Order for the disposal of benefices is preserved in S. P. Dom., Geo. I, B. 54, another in B. 68; and a third in Gibson MSS. iv. 38. The Order is printed in Appendix B, No. 2.

Robert Walpole, who was left behind in town, mentioned to him the new arrangement about preferments. Despite his earnest advocacy Walpole could not secure a categorical answer, and Gibson at once perceived from his report of the conversation that this amounted to a refusal, unless further pressure could be brought to bear upon the recalcitrant Chancellor.[1] Accordingly he wrote an urgent letter to Townshend, requesting him to use all his influence to defeat this obstinacy. He pointed out that the new scheme had been adopted because it was considered to be for the King's service, and that it was therefore incumbent upon all who opposed it to demonstrate that the contrary was true. This was particularly necessary in the case of the present objector, because there was a natural presumption that he would follow the practice of his predecessor unless he had some powerful reason for his refusal. Without the concurrence of the Chancellor the project would lose its force and effect, and if his opposition were grounded upon private motives only, such as the desire to oblige his personal friends, then the question must be decided whether individual interests should prevail over national. The reversion to the old method would bring back all the scandals of the promotion of unworthy clergymen, and provide a new crop of instances of ' that shameful forgetfulness of obligations received from the Crown, which had all along appeared at elections and on the other occasions among the clergy who had received favours from the successive Chancellors '. Further, it would make an exceedingly bad impression upon the clergy, so that the good effects of the original benefaction would be almost entirely discounted. Only thirteen months ago the new Order had been published with all solemnity and in the most formal manner, and its sudden withdrawal after so short a time would create a natural suspicion ' that there was an unsteadiness in the publick administration, that these seeming favours and encouragements from the Court to the clergy and the universities were only intended for present amusements, and that the rest would quickly vanish as this had done '. Thus the Government would suffer loss of prestige, and since the results

[1] Gibson to Townshend, 7 July 1725, S. P. Dom., Geo. I, B. 57.

of their action would be felt in every diocese, their enemies in all parts of the country would take advantage of their discomfiture, finding in it a welcome handle for their reflections and criticisms.[1] These arguments seemed to Townshend to be 'certainly of weight', and after consulting His Majesty about the matter, he dispatched to Lord King a copy of the Order which his predecessor had accepted together with an intimation that the King 'made no question' but that, upon realizing 'the tendency of it for the advantage of the Church and the good of his service, (he) would likewise think fit to follow the same method'.[2] Despite this appeal, the Lord Chancellor remained adamant. He was not willing to surrender the prerogatives of his office. At the decisive moment the Ministry gave way, preferring rather to throw over the new scheme than to provoke a great controversy. Lord Carteret was of opinion that 'there was a right of prerogative in the matter, the exercise of which had, by long prescription, been in the Chancellor, and *quieta movere* was against prudence for the most part, whether it was by force or law', and his colleagues assented cordially to this doctrine. They did not share the reforming zeal of their prelate, and preferred the endurance of present abuses to the storm and temper which a determined attack upon vested interests would produce. Accordingly the plan was quietly dropped. A feeble attempt at revival was made on the accession of George II, but was again defeated by the imperturbable firmness of the Chancellor. The new King redelivered the seals to him on the 16th June 1727, and about July 8th told him 'that he expected to nominate to all benefices and prebendaries that the Chancellor usually nominated to'. The latter replied that 'this was a right belonging to his office, annexed to it by Act of Parliament and immemorial usage, and he hoped that His Majesty would not put things out of their ancient course'. At their next meeting he was informed that he should go on as usual.[3] Thus

[1] Gibson to Townshend, 7 July 1725, Gibson MSS. iv. 39.

[2] Townshend to Gibson, 20 July 1725; Townshend to Lord King, 9 July 1725: ibid. 40, 41.

[3] Diary of Lord Chancellor Peter King, *Life of John Locke*, vol. ii, p. 47. In Welsey's *Lives of Eminent Judges* this incident is ascribed to George I

Lord King had twice defeated the attempt to deprive him of his patronage, of which he proved a jealous defender.[1]

This reverse was a sore disappointment to Gibson. He had already informed the Government of the very unfavourable impression which their retreat would produce upon the clergy, and he was seriously afraid that it would shake their whole credit. Also it was a distinct personal rebuff for himself. Just as the acceptance of his plan had been a testimony of his power, so its abandonment was a reflection upon his authority. In point of fact, it had never been a really practical scheme. Apart from the almost inevitable opposition of the Chancellor, the Ministry itself, under existing conditions, could not afford to give away so valuable a means of satisfying private obligations. Personal interests and political debts would have to be met in part by the recompense of ecclesiastical preferments. Gibson was compelled henceforth to recognize this. Whilst still retaining his own conviction that it could never be for the King's service, much less for the honour of his Administration, so far to regard any private recommendation as to advance inferior men to posts which their superiors desired but could not obtain, he nevertheless recognized that the Ministry might think it good upon occasion to yield to things which a bishop could not consider it to his credit to be believed to have any part in. For the future, therefore, he accepted a compromise; the lesser rewards which the Court could give, should be disposed of by the politicians upon their own recommendation and responsibility; in the greater offices, bishoprics, deaneries, and the like, he was determined to have his own way, or else to make public avowal of his opposition to any appointment which he considered improper. In the management of episcopal promotions, he strove hard to govern translations according to seniority. Nothing seemed more unbecoming to him than the consecration of presbyters to some of the most important and wealthiest sees, whilst a large

(p. 261). But (1) immediately after Lord King's appointment, His Majesty went to Hanover, and (2) there is no entry in King's diary from 1st to 24th July 1725.

[1] Whiston, *Memoirs*, i, pp. 35 and 162, notices King's watchful jealousy of his promotions.

number of bishops who held the smaller ones were passed over. In the early years of the reign he had protested vigorously to Wake against the too rapid rise of Hoadly, complaining that it could not be expected that others of the Bench 'would be easy to see a young brother advanced over all their heads to sit in state at His Grace's right hand'.[1] Consequently he attempted in his own time to redress this grievance. He refused to consecrate Francis Hare to the rich see of Bath and Wells, thinking it would cast a slight upon a considerable part of the Bench, and instead appointed him to St. Asaph.[2] Similarly in 1736 he would not consent to Dr. Madox's retaining the Deanery of Wells in commendam with the Bishopric of St. Asaph, because he would thus be better provided for at first setting out than many others had been upon a translation.[3] By a steady adherence to this line of action he hoped to correct the recent tendency to advance younger men over the heads of their seniors, and to restore things by degrees into their old channel. It was an attitude characteristic of the orderly mind of 'Dr. Codex', to whom anything suggestive of absence of system and regularity was irritating and offensive.

From the consideration of the object and method of his plans for the institution of Whitehall preachers, the foundation of the new professorships, and the reorganization of promotions, a clear idea may be obtained of Gibson's conception of his duty as ecclesiastical adviser of the Ministry. The primary aim of all his activities was to reconcile the Church to the Whig Administration, and as a result of the peculiar circumstances of the period, he could only imagine one way of achieving this end, namely, the creation of a strong clerical Whig interest and the severe ostracism of the Tory clergy. The emoluments of the office of preacher in the Chapel Royal were to be given, as the Oxford critic observed, only to those who were 'staunch Whigs and openly professed themselves to be so';[4] one of the essential qualifications of the Regius Professors was that

[1] Gibson to Wake, 25 July 1717, Wake MSS. xx, Miscellaneous, vol. iv.
[2] Gibson to White Kennet, 16 Sept. 1727, Kennet Collections, No. 16; Lansdowne MSS. 1017, B. M.
[3] Gibson to Walpole, 15 Feb. 1735–6, Gibson MSS. vii. 41.
[4] Portland MSS. vii. 377.

they should have sound political principles; and the avowed object of the scheme of preferments was to encourage those clergy who were 'of known affection and zeal' for the reigning dynasty. This fundamental maxim governed all Gibson's ecclesiastical appointments. He wished gradually to draw into his power all the patronage of the State, and to devote it to the single end of strengthening the Whig party in the Church. More especially was he careful to inquire into the political orthodoxy of those who were to be made bishops and themselves to exercise great influence in this manner. A glance at the list of his first nominations will establish the truth of this contention. Bishop Willis had distinguished himself by the speech he had delivered against Atterbury at his impeachment, and was rewarded with the see of Salisbury. Hoadly was notorious for his Whiggism, and he, too, had played an important part in turning public opinion against the episcopal traitor. Green of Norwich had founded his subsequent fortunes upon the zeal which he had shown for the House of Hanover at the death of Anne, whilst his successor, Dr. Leng, was recommended because of his firmness to the Protestant succession. These examples could be reinforced by others, if it were necessary to compile a weightier body of testimony to establish proof of the character of Gibson's policy. But no words could be clearer or more decisive than those of his own confession. Reviewing the course of his relations with the Ministry, after his withdrawal from the position of ecclesiastical adviser, he declared that he had pursued a consistent line of conduct, without wavering, throughout. At his first admission into their confidence, he had informed them that 'if he engaged, it must be upon a clear Church-Whig bottom', and agreeably to this 'the persons whom he recommended to the favour of the Court were such as, besides their known affection to the established Church were also known to be well affected towards the administration in the State'. He confessed that 'he would not have thought himself just to the Ministry, if he had not considered the good will of the persons to them and their administration, as well as other qualifications for the King's service'; and he had proceeded steadily in this rule, not only

in the case of those whom he recommended to the favour of the Crown, but also in that of all whom he appointed to preferments in his own gift.[1] This policy he had inherited from his patron and master, Archbishop Tenison, according to whose interpretation he had understood it to mean that the Whigs should not have 'any concern with the Tory bishops beyond common civility'. The latter were to be excluded from all the favours of the Court and the confidences of the Government, and also, since the Convocations were now in abeyance, they would have no part in the private deliberations of the Whig prelates concerning the affairs of the Church. A sentence of severe ostracism was to be passed upon them. The audacity of this resolution is astounding at first sight. It seemed to be not only the deliverance of the spiritual society, bound hand and foot, into the power of Caesar, but its prostitution also to serve the ends of a single political party. Yet this servitude was proposed, and, so far as circumstances would permit, translated into action, not by the Erastian Hoadly, whose views of ecclesiastical authority were notoriously lax, but by a prelate whom the satirists pilloried as the spiritual descendant of Archbishop Laud, and the most dangerous enemy of the civil constitution since his execution.[2] Gibson's policy did not pass without criticism among the influential Churchmen of his own day. It was 'freely censured, as too narrow', by some of his episcopal brethren, who sought by intrigue to upset his position and overthrow his schemes. Nevertheless, since it was the avowed plan of campaign upon which he acted during the whole period of his intimacy with the Ministry, it is necessary to ask if there were not powerful reasons which pressed it upon him, despite its apparent inconsistency with his High Church principles.

In point of fact, there was not only a rational explanation of his conduct, but a very considerable justification for it, in

[1] Gibson, 'My Case in Relation to the Ministry and the Whigs,' Gibson MSS. iv. 32; cf. Appendix D, No. 1.

[2] 'The Parallel: or Laud and C(o)d(e)x compared. Being true pictures of those celebrated High Priests, showing the great resemblance between them, both in principles and practices.' *B. M. Catalogue of Prints and Drawings*, Div. I, Satires, vol. iii, Pt. I, 2280.

the nature of the political problems which he was called upon to solve. On the one hand the maintenance of the Protestant Succession was essential to preserve the civil and religious liberties of the English nation, and on the other, the reconciliation of Church and Crown was the only means of establishing the Hanoverians against their enemies. Gibson rendered a valuable service to his country by directing his attention to this work of pacification. But why did he adopt that particular policy? Could not the clergy be won over without distinction of party? What reason was there for the appropriation of all favours to the clerical Whigs? The answer is to be found in the fact that to many zealous and high-minded patriots the Tory party seemed to be involved in the treasonable movement against the throne, and its clerical members to be at least as dangerous as the lay, because of the influence which they possessed in almost every part of the country. As traitors therefore they were to be repressed, and every opportunity of strengthening the loyalists against them to be improved to the best advantage. It is impossible to dispute that there was a considerable measure of truth in this contention. 'The Tory party, under Queen Anne was to a great extent, and under George I was almost exclusively Jacobite.'[1] Yet the Legitimist King was a Papist, and his last appearance in his dominions had been at the head of a body of foreign troops, supported by France. Since the failure of this attempt, it had been proved that not even the solemnity of an oath, nor the constraints of conscience, could furnish any guarantee against the treason of Bishop Atterbury. If the leader of the Tory clergy could be guilty of such duplicity, what could be expected of the discontented rank and file, who had no opportunities of receiving the royal favour, nor of understanding the real intentions of the new dynasty and its Government? As a result of these suspicions Gibson feared that a Jacobite heart was hidden behind every Tory cassock, and determined henceforth to trust none of that party, but rather to fill every strategic position in the Church with approved Whigs who would be watchmen and guardians of the throne. If his policy be

[1] Lecky, *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. i, p. 2.

condemned as mistaken, at least it must be allowed to be excusable.

On the other hand, even granting the lawfulness of his aims, Gibson's methods were hardly calculated to serve them best, or to contribute to the ultimate benefit of the Church. There were a large number of moderate Tories, who might have been caressed or cajoled into loyalty, but whom measures of rigid exclusion would only drive into a more stubborn resistance. Exasperated already by the silencing of Convocation, deeply offended by the exile of its champion and their own, the spectacle of the triumphant Administration imposing a fresh batch of Whig bishops upon the Church, and organizing an ingenious scheme to use its chief preferments and dignities as political bribes was hardly calculated to soften their resentment. It was more likely that they would be still further alienated. Also there was a serious danger that the Church might be delivered up to the domination of one party as completely as the State was during the reign of the first two Georges. The Tory clergy seemed to be threatened with extinction. Gibson himself confessed in 1727 that 'the body of the Tory priests had stood entire for fourteen years last past, whereas the number of Whig presbyters was much narrowed by frequent removes to the Bench',[1] a striking tribute to the success of his policy of isolating the Tories and reducing their influence. In politics they could still maintain their existence as a constitutional opposition, but the Church had no place for a party out of office. Similarly the new alliance might easily degenerate into the most unseemly prostitution of ecclesiastical promotions as the instruments of political jobbery. The level of spiritual capacity and intellectual ability displayed by the nominees of a highly organized party administration might be no higher than that of the unworthy candidates recommended by those private patrons, whose power Gibson was so anxious to destroy. It is impossible to escape the conviction that a monopoly of Church patronage by the Whig oligarchy would have been an undesirable and evil arrangement. The corrupt practices of the Duke of

[1] Gibson to Walpole, n.d., Gibson MSS. iv. 19.

Newcastle afford sufficient evidence of this. Nevertheless it must be admitted to the credit of Gibson that he never succumbed to the temptation to subordinate religious to political interests. He never advanced a man to a position of responsibility merely because of his support of the Whigs in the State. He demanded a convinced adherence to the creed and constitution of the Church as the indispensable qualification for preferment. Loyalty to the Administration was a necessary but 'an additional accomplishment', and was never accepted as a substitute for the former. Fortunately the possibility of a complete Whig domination of the Church was prevented by circumstances over which he had no control. The Tory phalanx, though diminished in numbers and deprived of influence, continued to maintain its existence within the Church, whilst Gibson became involved in increasing difficulties with the Whigs whom he could not withhold from open rebellion against their uncongenial role of defenders of the Church.

V

THE FAILURE OF THE WHIG ALLIANCE

ALTHOUGH there might be room for considerable difference of opinion concerning the wisdom of Gibson's new policy in the Church, there could be no question as to the reality of his influence. But he had not maintained his position without effort or without arousing considerable opposition. At the outset of his admission into the partnership of Government, he had asserted his supremacy over the feeble Archbishop at Lambeth, and he had also had a contest for precedence with the northern Primate, from which he had emerged victorious. The metropolitical see of York, vacant by the death of Sir William Dawes in April 1724, had been filled by the promotion in the following November of Lancelot Blackburne, Bishop of Exeter. The late Archbishop had not been in favour with the Ministry, but his successor was *persona grata* at Court. As Bishop of Exeter he had been the first of the Court prelates in title and dignity, and as he had also held the office of Lord Almoner, he had been a close competitor with Gibson for the position of ecclesiastical adviser to the Government. Now, since his elevation to the superior dignity of the Archiepiscopate, he might hope to challenge the supremacy of his rival. An early opportunity of putting his fortunes to the test arose from the vacancy of the see of Chester by the death of Bishop Gastrell on 14th November 1725. The Archbishop was particularly anxious to secure the consecration of his friend Dr. John Gilbert to the bishopric, and, as it soon became known, that 'the two great prelates differed about the see of Chester', and that the difference was so high 'that they spoke not to one another',[1] the matter engaged the public attention.

[1] Portland MSS. vii. 405–6; cf. Sir R. Walpole to Lord Townshend, 29 Nov.–10 Dec. 1725: 'If great care be not taken, the vacancy of the see of Chester will make an irreparable breach betwixt our two governing prelates, of York and London. The first in the strongest terms espousing Dr. Gilbert, the other most determined against him.' Coxe, *Memoirs of Sir R. Walpole*, vol. ii, p. 492.

Dr. Gilbert had been a friend of Blackburne at Exeter; and owing to this acquaintance, and to his aristocratic connexions, his rise in the Church had been extraordinarily rapid. In 1721, at the age of only twenty-eight, he had been preferred to the rich chapter living of Ashburton, and in the next year had secured the Prebend of Exeter. Following closely upon the heels of this, he had been made Sub-Dean in 1724, and was already a Chaplain-in-Ordinary to the King. Now it was proposed to advance him to the Episcopate at the comparatively early age of thirty-three, though he had not given evidence of any remarkable natural talents to justify so unusual a course.

The Bishop of London proceeded, in his customarily energetic manner, to take immediate steps to nip this improper scheme in the bud. Once again Lord Townshend was away at Hanover in attendance on the King at the critical moment, and thither Gibson dispatched his weighty letter of complaint. He declared straightly that he could not for a moment agree to this preferment, but on the contrary was obliged to oppose it in the strongest possible manner, being confirmed in his attitude 'by finding a general concurrence of the bishops and clergy in the same opinion'. Therefore he warned the Ministry that they could scarcely do any one thing that would be more justly or more universally condemned. The reasons which had led him to this decision were set forth fully. First among them was the extreme youth of Gilbert, who in addition to being little over thirty years of age, was among the youngest, if not actually the youngest, of the Chaplains-in-Ordinary. The general age of bishops at their consecration in the past had been nearer fifty than forty, and in many cases above fifty. That is to say, they had been such persons as 'were grown to be grave men, and had gained experience, and arrived to some figure in the world' befitting the character of a bishop. It would be preposterous to advance a younger man, without any other distinguishing qualification to justify the exception, over the heads of so many who were his superiors in learning and years. To do so would create a dangerous precedent for the future, and would be a deliberate encourage-

ment to the junior clergy who had considerable Court influence to aim at bishoprics at a like early age. The late Bishop had held a Canonry of Christ Church in commendam, and if even this minor preferment were bestowed upon Gilbert, there would be many Masters in Oxford who would think it too quick an advancement for one of so few years. More important still was the consideration of the interests of the Church in the northern diocese. The county of Chester was notoriously a stronghold of the Papists, and Bishop Gastrell, the friend and defender of Atterbury, had openly played into the hands of the Tories, so that there was need of careful reflection before choosing his successor. Unless these bad traditions were to be continued, the new Bishop would need to be a person of great zeal for His Majesty's service, and able by the exercise of his authority to overawe the clergy, and by his experience in administration to avoid any false step, which would otherwise be seized upon immediately and maliciously by the enemies of the Administration. For these reasons, Gibson could not tolerate the proposal to advance Gilbert; and, strengthened by the support of the majority of his brethren, he pointed out that the only way to preserve the existing confidence between the Ministry and the Bench was to consult the wishes of the latter in filling vacant sees, and to dispose of the King's favours in a fair and natural order.[1]

The details of the communications between the rival prelates and the Court at Hanover were not known to the curious and interested body of spectators. Nevertheless the absence of the King and Lord Townshend on the Continent added the cherished element of mystery to the negotiations, and ensured an eager attention to the various and conflicting rumours which were in constant circulation among the partisans of either side. The inspired intelligences varied almost every day. On December 9th the Yorkists rejoiced exceedingly to learn, as was thought 'from sure hands', that Gilbert was safe and that 'London after all his burning, had knocked under'. In their opinion 'next to the archbishop's own promotion,

[1] Gibson to Townshend, n.d., Gibson MSS. iv. 21, 'Reasons against Dr. Gilbert.'

this was the most remarkable that had ever happened in this poor church '.[1] For a time their news continued to be good. On the 23rd it was still taken for certain that the battle was won, though Gibson was pressing hard and had prepared a memorial against Gilbert. He was even believed, in his efforts to secure the support of Walpole, to have consented ' to let Hare be Dean of St. Paul's and Sherlock Bishop of Chester '.[2] Within another week, the balance seemed to have altered. It was now thought that ' London would carry the day ',[3] and before the next seven days had passed, he was reported to have observed ' that he had all with him except the women, and if it was to be carried by them he had nothing to say '.[4] The ecclesiastical world watched eagerly to see who would land the prize. The only sure thing seemed to be that spiritual tempers were rising high. ' Be the event what it will, they say the breach is irreparable betwixt York and London ' wrote Canon Stratford to his correspondent Edward Harley. The latest rumour in Oxford was that Gibson was pushing the claims of Peploe, who had succeeded in obtaining the Wardenship of Manchester College despite the refusal of Gastrell to recognize his Lambeth degree, and who was now aspiring to succeed to his see. If this were true, Gibson's aim was doubtless ' to show his regard for our late friend's memory, and to the universities ',[5]—a comment of delightfully unconscious irony in view of the fact that Dr. Gilbert's doctorate was a Lambeth LL.D. and that Archbishop Blackburne himself had received his D.D. from Wake.[6]

At length the suspense was relieved and the appointment announced. ' To the astonishment of all the world Peploe was Bishop of Chester ' ; or at any rate, if not to the astonishment of the whole world, certainly to the chagrin of the defeated Tories. It was said that ' York was under the highest resentments and his opponent triumphed as much ', and there were even whispered rumours going round of a heated inter-

[1] Portland MSS. vii. 410.
[2] Ibid., p. 411.
[3] Ibid., p. 413.
[4] Ibid., p. 415.
[5] Ibid., p. 414.
[6] Gilbert received the LL.D. 8 Jan. 1724, Blackburne his D.D. 28 June 1716. *Gent. Mag.*, 1864, i. 637.

view between the Ministry and the contending prelates at which 'verba brigosa passed between them'.[1] Henceforth every one found it easy to believe the current report that all suppliants for favour must make their address to the Bishop of London, 'for the Court would not make a bishop against his inclination'.[2] Peploe was advanced to the uneasy dignity of Chester, and by a dispensation allowed to hold the Wardenship of Manchester College also. Throughout his episcopate he was involved in perpetual difficulties with the Tory clergy of that Church, and, with the support and advice of Gibson he strove hard to fulfil his mission of overaweing the clergy and suppressing the Jacobites. Dr. Gilbert was rewarded by the offer of the vacant Canonry of Christ Church, and in the following December by the Deanery of Exeter.[3]

One thing at least was clear from the incident, that there was within the Church an influential party against Gibson. The hereditary quarrels between father and son in the Hanoverian royal house furnished an opportunity for rallying the forces of the opposition. The household of the Prince of Wales became the Adullamite cave of refuge for all the malcontents, ecclesiastical and political. The Princess and her confidante Mrs. Clayton, better known by her later title as Lady Sundon, gathered round them a company of heterodox divines headed by the Latitudinarian Hoadly and the Arian Dr. Samuel Clarke. Among their circle were also numbered Thomas Sherlock, Master of the Temple, the acknowledged leader of the younger Tory clergy, and Francis Hare, Dean of Worcester, who had ambitions beyond his present station, despite the fact that he had once fallen under the censure of Convocation for unorthodoxy.[4]

The Bishop of London might well feel considerable uneasiness

[1] Portland MSS. vii. 417. [2] Ibid., p. 413.

[3] His present disappointment was hardly a temporary set-back, for his advancement continued to be phenomenally rapid. He was consecrated to the see of Llandaff in 1740, translated to Salisbury in 1749, and to York in 1757, the last promotion crowning a career, the remarkable success of which seems hardly to have been due to his possession of any outstanding abilities.

[4] Hare's 'Letter on the Difficulties and Discouragements which attend the Study of the Scriptures in the way of private Judgement' had been censured by Convocation, as tending to scepticism (1714).

and apprehension when he looked forward to the possibilities of the next reign. His peace of mind was further disturbed by the more immediate prospect of serious difficulties arising out of the expected resignation of Dr. Godolphin, Dean of St. Paul's. Although the Deanery did not actually fall vacant until 1726, Godolphin's retirement had been anticipated almost monthly during the two preceding years. It was well known that Dr. Hare was ambitious of higher preferment, and that he had good hopes of being transferred from Worcester to St. Paul's, of which he was already a Residentiary. Sir Robert Walpole, whose tutor he had been at Cambridge, was anxious to do him the favour he desired, so that in view of his influence in other circles his chances of success seemed very promising except for his suspicion that Gibson was hostile to him. Hare was so strongly convinced of this that he called upon the Bishop to inform him that both the Court and the Ministry were well disposed towards himself if only they could count upon his lordship's approval. From the point of view of Gibson, however, the real trouble lay not in the question of the fitness of Hare, but in the probable policy of the Heir Apparent when he had succeeded to the throne. Since Hare was one of the chief favourites of the Prince and Princess, their influence would certainly be exerted to secure his consecration to the Episcopate upon the first vacancy occurring after their accession. In this case the Deanery of St. Paul's would be again at the disposal of the Crown, and considering the Bishop of London's probable relations with the new sovereigns, there would be little need to inquire whether he must expect 'a Dean who would support his interest in the City, or one who would take the work out of his hands and manage it against him'. The less prospect, therefore, there was of his enjoying the protection of the Court, the more it behoved him to do his utmost to secure support and ease in his own Church.[1] This point of view was shared by Townshend, and the solution of the problem was postponed until the actual vacancy should occur, in the hopes that in the meantime some other suitable preferment might present itself which was not liable to these objec-

[1] Gibson to Townshend, 18 Aug. 1724, Gibson MSS. iv. 11.

tions. In 1726, however, rumour asserted that Dr. Godolphin was at last about to withdraw, but that instead of resigning the Canonry which he held with his Deanery, he proposed to continue in possession of that. This unexpected design complicated the situation. Gibson had decided to take the risk of accepting Hare as Dean, provided that he could appoint to the Residentiaryship a person whom he could trust to follow his policy and support him in all respects. But now he would have to hazard the Deanery without gaining any further interest for himself in the Chapter. He received Dr. Hare, but warned the Ministry that he would consider it his duty to supply any further vacancies which might occur in the Chapter with clergy of his own selection, despite any contrary wishes of the Dean, and that he might find it essential to his own security to lay his veto upon the promotion of the latter to the Bench, at a time when no regard would be paid to him in the choice of a successor.[1] Accordingly, upon the resignation of Godolphin, the Dean of Worcester was nominated to succeed him. Gibson felt that he had put himself 'at mercy' in this respect, in order to oblige the Ministry, but actually his fears were never realized. Hare continued to hold the Deanery until 1740, and became one of his trusted friends in the later years of his administration.

From another quarter Gibson had to resist a determined attempt on the part of Archbishop Wake to secure a Residentiaryship of St. Paul's for his son-in-law, Dr. Lynch. The latter was already overwhelmed with pluralities and the manner in which he continued to accumulate preferments, the duties of which he entirely neglected, made him the object of bitter attacks as 'The Great Churchman' in contemporary satires. But in this case the motive of his application was not mere greed. It was rather hoped by this means to insinuate into the Cathedral Chapter one who could be relied upon to oppose the Bishop, and it was for this reason that Gibson was concerned 'in point of administration, and the ease and quiet of his own life' to prevent the success of this attack, particularly as he had already surrendered in the case of the Deanery. For

[1] Gibson to Walpole, n.d., Gibson MSS. iv. 13.

if any dispute should arise between the Dean and himself he could have no doubt 'which side the person was most like to take who was under the direction of the Archbishop'.[1] Lord Townshend fully agreed that both 'the ease and quiet' of the Bishop and 'his power of doing service to His Majesty and the public' depended upon the maintenance of cordial relations with his Chapter, and therefore the application of the Archbishop was refused. So long as the present régime continued Gibson's position was secure.

It is not customary to regard George I as the author of a particularly enlightened ecclesiastical policy nor to consider his death a grave loss to the Church. Nevertheless there can be little doubt that the accession of George II was an unpropitious event to Bishop Gibson. This was not due to his discernment of any striking superiority of character or ability in the first of the Hanoverians. The words of Swift could be aptly used of Gibson that 'he was a good Whig by thinking it sufficient to be a good subject with little personal esteem for princes farther than as their virtues deserved'. His professions of ardent loyalty and affection to the throne were the expression of his adherence to the Protestant Succession rather than of any personal regard for the King himself. The real merit of George I in Gibson's eyes was that he adopted the policy of his Ministers without demur. He accepted the promotions which they recommended and obeyed their wishes with remarkable submission. Above all, he turned his back upon the Tories, and delivered himself entirely into the control of the Whigs. Upon his death a complete change came over the situation. His son succeeded to the throne, bringing with him a motley train of grasping favourites, the majority of whom were inspired with no generous sentiments towards the servants of the old order. The chief figures of the new Court are too well known to need a detailed description; they have been faithfully delineated in the memoirs of the time. The King is a familiar character, with his heavy, slow-moving intellect, his gross and degrading vices, his coarseness of speech and insensibility to all higher feelings. From the dullness of his wits it was evident

[1] Gibson to Townshend, Gibson MSS. iv. 14.

that he would not exercise the leading influence at Court. In his own words, he found on many occasions that 'he had not the best interest' there.[1] The ruling power was his wife, the illustrious Caroline, to whose charm of character and high intellectual gifts full justice has been done by historians. She is the only person of the royal household who has captured the admiration and respect of subsequent generations. Of her private virtues it is not apposite to speak here. But her strength of will and definite opinions concerning ecclesiastical politics were a source of constant vexation and difficulty to Gibson. Hardly less remarkable than the Queen was Lady Sundon, the agent of all her mistress' bounty, who had secured an ascendancy over her mind as complete as that which Caroline had established over her royal husband. On the other side stood the sinister figure of Lord Hervey the intimate friend both of King and Queen, with a pronounced laxity of morals and of opinions, and a violent anti-clerical prejudice. There seemed little prospect of peace and comfort for the Bishop of London, if he were to continue the servant of the new Administration, amid such a company of heterogeneous and unquiet spirits supported by members of the Episcopal Bench who attributed to him their long exclusion from power, and by ambitious presbyters who made him responsible for their failure to secure higher promotion.

At first it seemed probable that the new King would make a clean sweep of all his father's servants, replacing them by his own favourites. Gibson's letter of congratulation to him upon his accession hinted plainly that it would probably be the last communication which he would have the honour to present.[2] But the political sagacity of Queen Caroline ordered matters otherwise. She realized at once that Walpole was the only person who could manage the Parliament and carry on the

[1] Pyle, *Memoirs of a Royal Chaplain* (ed. Hartshorne), p. 179.

[2] Gibson to George II, Add. MSS. 22627, f. 12, B. M.; cf. a letter from W. Morice to Bishop Atterbury, 2 Jan. 1727–8: 'You observe rightly that all things don't run in one channel, as they did in the late reign, and that Sir R.'s influence in ecclesiastical affairs is at an end. Nor has the Archbishop of Canterbury any power in that matter. He imagined he should have the first week or fortnight of the new reign, and people thought so too, but he found his recommendations disregarded.' Coxe's *Walpole*, ii. 240.

Administration, and maintained him in his present station. As part of the bargain thus made, she had to accept Walpole's Pope, the Bishop of London (through whom he kept the clergy in good temper) as the ecclesiastical adviser of the Ministry. This was a condition by no means welcome to her clerical acquaintances. For if the amateur politicians of the new Court were incensed against Walpole, the dissatisfied ecclesiastics were intensely jealous of Gibson. For several years past they had denounced his imperious and dominating manner to the Prince and Princess, and now they were required to reconcile themselves to the continuance of his dictatorship. Gibson found that the ill impressions which they had given their Majesties of him, and the prejudices occasioned thereby, were greater than he could have imagined.[1] Yet the support of the Court was indispensable to him. During the late reign he had made many enemies; the Tories hated him for his support of the Government; and he was unpopular with that section of the Whig party which was growing daily more restless under the leadership of Walpole, because he was unwavering in his loyalty to the Ministry. But he had been 'comforted and kept in heart by the Court' who were pleased to value his efforts and think kindly of them.[2] If his antagonists should gain an interest in the royal household, they would render his position much more difficult. Gibson needed to work in harmony with the new Court leaders. But this was an almost impossible task from the outset.

The reasons for Gibson's failure to work in harmony with Queen Caroline and her entourage are not far to seek. In the first place, he was a 'very ill courtier'. Despite the fact that, as Dean of the Chapels Royal, he was in constant communication with their Majesties, he always retained an 'uncourtlike spirit'.[3] He could have little sympathy with the gallantries of George II, nor was he attracted into the circle of philosophic divines who debated controversial points of theology with the

[1] Gibson to White Kennet, Lansdowne MSS. 1017, Kennet Correspondence, lxxxiii, No. 16, B.M.

[2] Gibson to Walpole, n.d., Gibson MSS. iv. 19.

[3] Gibson to Wake. Wake MSS. xx, Miscellaneous Letters and Papers, vol. iv.

Queen in her closet. In his attendance upon the Court he adopted the maxim of his master, Archbishop Tenison, 'that though he could do no great good at Court, yet he could hinder mischief',[1] and therefore he did not neglect this side of his duty, though it was uncongenial to his temper. But this difference of temperament was not sufficient to create a divergence of policy. Although there could be little warmth in the personal relations of the King and the Bishop, there were many elements in the character of Caroline which could hardly fail to command the admiration of Gibson, nor could she withhold her respect for his integrity of motive and fidelity to his principles. There can be little doubt that she placed a very high value upon his services. Nevertheless, their opposition upon fundamental questions of policy destroyed the possibility of co-operation. Gibson had worked for the creation of a strong Whig interest in the Church to the total exclusion of Tories and unorthodox divines. Caroline on the contrary had a pronounced weakness both for heterodoxy and moderate Toryism; and both parties were imperious and unyielding in the maintenance of their positions.

The tendency of the Queen's theological opinions was apparent from her choice of Latitudinarian clergy as her friends and counsellors. It is impossible to determine exactly whether her unorthodoxy was the result of their influence or whether she had gathered them around her because she had already embarked upon dangerous speculations. It is clear that she was deeply interested in divinity and that her studies had weakened her faith rather than strengthened it.[2] These natural tendencies towards scepticism had been greatly strengthened by her association with Mrs. Clayton, her confidante, whom she raised subsequently to the dignity of Viscountess Sundon and whose influence over her it is difficult to exaggerate. The chief friends of Lady Sundon were Bishop Hoadly and Dr. Samuel Clarke, the protagonists of Latitudinarian theology, from whom she had imbibed her divinity

[1] Gibson to Wake, 24 Aug. 1717, Wake MSS. xx, vol. iv.

[2] Thomson, *Memoirs of Viscountess Sundon*, i, p. 33; Lord Orford's *Reminiscences*, p. 87.

and whom she had been instrumental in introducing to the favour of her royal mistress. She had been the means of securing for Hoadly his succession of valuable preferments, and she had drawn Clarke under her protective patronage during the period when he was vigorously attacked by Convocation.[1] Consequently both her royal mistress and herself became deeply infected with the fashionable liberal opinions, and desired to advance their friends to higher places in the Church. In this design they were well aware that they must encounter the hostility of Gibson. Lady Sundon had a considerable clientèle of episcopal flatterers, who were indefatigable in their efforts to gain her approbation. But the Bishop of London was not amenable to bribes or threats. He could neither be induced to enter the circle of her satellites, nor cowed into submissive acceptance of her decrees. Therefore she hated him, and determined to thwart his schemes and overthrow his power.[2]

An occasion of dispute soon presented itself. The see of Bangor was vacant in September 1727 by the translation of Bishop Baker to Norwich, and that of Bath and Wells, one of the richest in the kingdom, in the following December by the death of Hooper. Walpole mentioned to Gibson that it had been hinted by 'a great lady'—whose identity cannot be a matter of doubt—that Dr. Samuel Clarke and Dean Hare were well fitted for these preferments. Dr. Samuel Clarke was a famous heretic, having been the leader of the attack upon the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity which had occasioned so great a controversy in the last reign. He had become so convinced of the falsity of the traditional presentation of this dogma that he had refused to accept any preferment which required subscription to the thirty-nine articles. Bishop Talbot had been anxious to advance him to a stall in Durham Cathedral but had always been prevented by his scruples on this point. Since this technicality would not be involved in the offer of a bishopric, it was understood that Clarke would be willing to accept this dignity. He had discussed the question

[1] Thomson, *Memoirs of Viscountess Sundon*, i, pp. 34, 66, 74, and *passim*.
[2] *Letters of Horace Walpole* (ed. Paget Toynbee), vol. i, p. 160.

with his friend, Mr. Thomas Emlyn, and had decided that he might conscientiously submit to consecration to the Episcopate. The really important consideration was, whether a suffragan Bishopric would be of any service to him in forwarding the cause which he had at heart? It might merely subject him to the constant vexation of archiepiscopal censures without materially increasing his opportunities of influence. For as it was his firm opinion that complaints about the general indifference of the educated classes to religion were useless without some serious attempt being made to rectify those things which were perceived to be amiss, so it was his intention if promoted to the Bench to gather round him a company of sympathetic divines who would join with him in his schemes of reformation.[1]

The proposal to nominate Clarke to one of the vacant sees was a direct challenge to the policy of Gibson who accordingly laid his absolute veto upon it. He informed Walpole that it would arouse universal resentment among the clergy, Whig as well as Tory, and that if it were carried out he would be compelled 'to declare his dislike of it in the plainest and most open manner and to show the sincerity of that declaration by his future conduct'.[2] The significance of these warnings was understood by the Prime Minister. He well knew that nothing would arouse the opposition of the clergy so much as the suspicion of heresy and the whisper that the Court were trying to force a heterodox divine upon the Bench; and if the flame of their wrath were fanned by a militant pronouncement of the Bishop of London, none could say what disturbance might not ensue. In order to avoid all danger of a clerical tempest he determined to oppose the promotion. Dr. Clarke therefore was not raised to the Episcopate, and Gibson had gained his point.

With regard to the other suggestion concerning Hare, this contingency had been foreseen by Gibson at the time of the vacancy of the Deanery of St. Paul's. During the intervening period he had formed the opinion that the Dean's theological

[1] *Memoirs of the Life and Sentiments of Dr. Samuel Clarke*, by Mr. Thomas Emlyn, pp. 26–8.

[2] Gibson to Walpole, n.d., Gibson MSS. iv. 18.

eccentricities were not very pronounced, and that in any case he did not possess the intellectual ability to make himself formidable. His elevation to the Episcopate therefore would not cause any disunion among the other bishops. But his nomination to the rich see of Bath and Wells could not be tolerated. It would mean advancing him over the heads of nine or ten bishops, each of whom would be glad to accept so lucrative a translation. Also they would draw the conclusion that they were to be cyphers in matters which concerned the public affairs of the Church, and that a new Court favourite was to receive all the honours of the day; and this would endanger a serious division of the Bench. For these reasons, and in accordance with his plan to govern the translation to Bishoprics by seniority and experience, Gibson declared that he could not be accessory either by word or deed to the appointment of Hare to Bath and Wells. Instead he presented a list of bishops in order of seniority to His Majesty and suggested that the vacant see should be offered to the senior prelate who was not better provided for.[1] In consequence Bishop Wynne of St. Asaph was promoted and Hare was consecrated to the less important Bishopric. By this means the problem of the Deanery of St. Paul's was happily solved, and the danger of a further conflict on that point avoided. In order to compensate Hare for the refusal of the wealthier see he was allowed to retain his Deanery in commendam, and so the internal peace of the Chapter was preserved.

Gibson never retreated from the position which he had taken up on the question of the exclusion of unorthodox clergy from the Bench. In 1733 occurred the famous episode of the nomination of Dr. Rundle to Gloucester. As it will be necessary

[1] Gibson to Walpole, n.d., Gibson MSS. iv. 18; Gibson to White Kennet, Lansdowne MSS. 1017, Kennet Correspondence, lxxxiii, No. 16; cf. a letter from W. Morice to Bishop Atterbury: 'The Queen intended Dr. Hare for the bishopric of Bath and Wells, and Dr. Sherlock for that of Norwich, but the whole ministry united in their representations against it, alleging it would disoblige the whole Bench of bishops to have the new consecrated ones let into the best preferments at once; and to carry their point they put Wynne upon taking Bath and Wells (for which it seems he made no application) and Baker upon taking Norwich to disappoint Sherlock.' Coxe, *Memoirs of Sir R. Walpole*, ii, p. 240.

to consider this in detail later, it is sufficient here to observe that although it was the most severe conflict in which the Bishop of London was involved, he maintained his position without yielding, and in the end carried the day. In like manner he prevented Hoadly from rising to a position of greater influence and authority. When a vacancy occurred at Durham in 1730, although it was known that Hoadly had set his heart upon securing it, he was passed over in favour of Gibson's friend Bishop Chandler of Lichfield, 'a creditable man and a Whig', according to Gibson's description of him, and one who had not attached himself to any other interest. Four years later the rich see of Winchester fell vacant by the death of Bishop Willis, and as a compromise was given to Hoadly. It was previously offered to Gibson who declined it, giving as one of his reasons for so doing that if he accepted this translation the Court would hardly be able to refuse London to Hoadly, who was not only unfit to discharge the numerous and heavy duties of that diocese, but was also personally unacceptable to the clergy, so that his going there would not be for the service of the King nor the ease of the Government.[1] There can be little question that it was due to the opposition of Gibson that Hoadly enjoyed comparatively little power, and that the creation of a strong Latitudinarian party on the Bench by the agency of the Queen was prevented.

Queen Caroline's interference in the question of preferments was not confined to her patronage of clergy of liberal opinions in theology. She ventured to lay profane hands upon Gibson's favourite scheme for reducing the Tory interest in the Church to insignificance. From the very outset of the reign the Bishop realized that 'the new experiment of Whig in the State and Tory in the Church' was to be tried. The Queen requested that a list should be given to her of the chief Whig clergy whom he recommended for promotion, and it was understood that she had made a similar request in other quarters where the merits of the Tory clergy were well considered. At first Gibson was disposed to refuse point-blank. He felt that her partiality towards the Tories and prejudice against the Whigs

[1] Gibson to Walpole, Gibson MSS. iii. 59.

were so evident that it would be unbecoming to comply with the suggestion. He wished Walpole to point out to their Majesties in unequivocal language that the fittest objects of their favour were 'the best among those of the clergy who had always been steady in the interest of the Protestant succession and the measures for supporting it', and that it was for their own service to promote such. Not only had this been the recognized Whig policy ever since the Revolution, but this was a peculiarly inauspicious moment to attempt any alteration, for as a result of the better disposition which had been growing up amongst the clergy during the past half dozen years, there was a likelihood of the number of well affected and qualified presbyters exceeding that of the available preferments.[1] Despite the intercession of the Prime Minister Queen Caroline adhered to her demand. Accordingly Gibson, pressed by the Ministers of State, and thinking it proper that he should submit his judgement to theirs, conceded the point, albeit with a very bad grace, and prepared a list of five names.[2] He quite understood the meaning of the new demand, and, foreseeing the difficulties and conflicts which would arise, was half inclined to surrender at once. He was not so 'fond of the employment' as to cling to it on any conditions. So he suggested to Walpole that the Queen should be informed of two plain truths. That the Bishop of London was quite in favour of her trying the policy of confiding in the Tories. For if that policy were successful all would be well; and if it failed, she would have learnt her lesson, which apparently she would not do without the actual experience. Also, that he was quite content to be Bishop of London without any share in the confidence of the Government, since he had no desire 'to go to sea when he saw both winds and weather against him'. If Her Majesty were really determined to make the affairs of the Church her chief study and concern, he would be quite willing to withdraw from any office which he held in that connexion.[3] In this case he suggested that Bishop

[1] Gibson to Walpole, n.d., Gibson MSS. iv. 18.
[2] Gibson to Duke of Newcastle, 24 Oct. 1727, S. P. Dom. Geo. II, B. 3.
[3] Gibson to Walpole, n.d., Gibson MSS. iv. 20.

Chandler of Lichfield should be her adviser. But this proposal was not satisfactory either to the Queen or to the Government. Both Townshend and Walpole were reluctant to exchange Gibson for a weaker man, and Caroline preferred Sherlock as her counsellor. So the existing arrangement was maintained.

On one point Caroline would not yield. She had decided that Sherlock must be a bishop. Gibson dreaded this even more than he did the influence of Hoadly, for though Sherlock was convincingly orthodox, he was the acknowledged leader of the Tory clergy. To whatever diocese he was appointed he would assuredly alienate all the Whig members both for cities and counties. Gibson prophesied that 'he would be found at the head of the Tory clergy in a twelvemonth after he was made a bishop', for if he were seen to be in favour at the Court they would flock to his standard, and if he were eclipsed, in revenge he would raise opposition by gathering them round himself.[1] Nevertheless, if he must be advanced the Ministry must make the best of the unfortunate circumstance by taking care to nominate him to a see where he could do least mischief in case he should 'take a wrong turn'. On 4th February 1727–8, he was therefore consecrated Bishop of Bangor; and seven years later, in 1734, received further promotion by his translation to Salisbury, in succession to Hoadly who had gone to Winchester. Thus he was safely established in a position of influence despite the opposition of the Bishop of London. The results of his preferment fulfilled expectations, for the Tory clergy ceased to yield a grudging submission to Gibson, and transferred themselves enthusiastically to the cause of his rival. Sherlock was soon surrounded by a goodly company of their party, who were 'running under his wing and soliciting his protection'.[2] Fortified by the friendship of the Queen and conscious of his strength as leader of the clerical Tory interest, he began to aspire to a higher office. He determined to make a bid for the Archbishopric, or, if the influence of Walpole prevailed in that direction in favour of Gibson, to secure for himself the see of London and

[1] Gibson to Walpole, n.d., Gibson MSS. iv. 20.
[2] Lord Hervey, *Memoirs of the Reign of George II*, vol. i, p. 463.

then override the Primate, according to the present practice.[1] In order to win over the clergy to his side, he attempted to outdistance Gibson in his zeal for the defence of Church power and clerical privilege. Unfortunately this involved him in conflict with the Ministry. In the famous episode of the Quakers' Tithe Bill in 1736 he was an uncompromising antagonist of its promoters, and worked hard to secure its rejection. He was successful in this, but only incurred the hostility of the Ministry and the disfavour of the Court. This incident was ultimately to bring about the downfall of Gibson, but as Sherlock had taken the same side, he could not turn the occasion to his own advantage. Instead Queen Caroline scolded him for 'being so blind and silly as to be running a race of popularity with the Bishop of London', and advised him to retire to his diocese.[2]

The elevation of Sherlock was a defeat in principle of Gibson's policy of excluding the Tory clergy from preferments as well as a victory for the party at Court which was personally opposed to him. Similarly the influence of Lord Hervey with Her Majesty prevailed to secure the consecration of Dr. Robert Butts, a friend of his, to the Bishopric of Norwich in 1733 despite the Bishop of London's disapproval.[2] On the other hand, of the five clergy whose names Gibson submitted to the King in 1727, three obtained Bishoprics by his influence: Dr. Elias Sydal was consecrated to St. David's in 1731, and translated to Gloucester in the same year, remaining there until his death in 1734: Dr. Thomas Tanner held the see of St. Asaph from 1731 to his death five years later: and Dr. Nicholas Claggett succeeded Sydal at St. David's in 1731, and was translated to Exeter in 1743. The two remaining divines, Dr. James Stillingfleet, Dean of Worcester, son of the famous Bishop by his second wife, and Dr. Thomas Cole, Dean of Norwich, continued in their present stations without further

[1] Lord Hervey, *Memoirs of the Reign of George II*, vol. i, p. 333; Pyle, *Memoirs of a Royal Chaplain* (ed. Hartshorne), p. 349.

Cf. As S(herloc)k at Temple was taking a boat
The waterman asked him which way he would float.
'Which way,' says the Doctor, 'why, fool, with the stream,'
To Paul's or to Lambeth, 'tis all one to him.

[2] Hervey, *Memoirs*, vol. ii, p. 103. [2] Ibid., p. 90.

preferment. On the whole, therefore, Gibson certainly held his own, and maintained his general control of promotions.[1]

It is customary to bestow unqualified praise upon Queen Caroline for her ecclesiastical promotions and to suggest that during the period of her reign she virtually monopolized the higher Church patronage. 'The bishops of George II' wrote a critical and learned essayist 'deserved the respect they met with. At no period in the history of our Church has the ecclesiastical patronage of the Crown been better directed than while it was secretly dispensed by Queen Caroline. For a brief period liberality and cultivation of mind were passports to promotion in the Church. Nor were politics a hindrance; the Queen earnestly pressed an English see upon Bishop Wilson'.[2] There is an element of grave exaggeration in thus ascribing all the best appointments of the decade 1727–37 to her superior genius. In reality Gibson may lay just claim to chief share of the credit. The advancement of Hoadly and Sherlock, both men of liberality and cultivation of mind, was certainly due to the influence of the Queen. It is also true that she showed an especial care for the interests of Berkeley, Butler and Secker. But the Bishop of London also was a warm supporter of Berkeley and made great efforts to help forward his scheme for planting a college in the New World.[3] He was also instrumental in securing the Bishopric of Bristol for Secker, of whom he had formed so high an opinion as to recommend him as the successor of Dr. Tyrwhit, his own son-in-law, in the Rectory of St. James's, Westminster, one of the most important livings in his diocese.[4] Again, it was by his

[1] Cf. A letter from W. Morice to Bishop Atterbury, 8 May 1728: 'Sir R. W. has gained his point in relation to Church preferments and you will scarce hear of any more promotions such as Hare and Sherlock. Her Majesty, they say, consults, and does nothing without Sir R.'s leave on that head.' Coxe, *Memoirs of Sir R. Walpole*, ii. 241.

[2] Mark Pattison in *Essays and Reviews*, p. 319.

[3] Gibson had pressed the Ministry to accept Berkeley's scheme, which he thought 'a design highly commendable' and believed that 'there was great probability of its having the intended effects and answering all that is proposed by it'. Throughout he was constant in his attempts to hold them to their promise, and tried to recompense Berkeley for the disappointment of their desertion; cf. S. P. Dom. Geo. I, B. 55, 6 March 1725.

[4] Beilby Porteous, *A Review of the Life and Character of the Rt. Rev. Dr. Thomas Secker*, 1797, p. 19.

influence that the learned Thomas Tanner received recognition by being nominated to the see of St. Asaph; and he not only made the early fortunes of Isaac Maddox, but secured his promotion to a Bishopric and encouraged him to write a defence of the Church in reply to Neal's History of the Puritans. He also pressed Dr. Chandler's claims to the see of Durham, because of the valuable services rendered by his writings against the Deists. It is therefore not justifiable to claim for Queen Caroline that 'the bench of bishops was practically of her selection'.[1] On the contrary, the influence of Gibson was predominant, although upon occasion the Queen succeeded in compelling his acquiescence to her wishes and in breaking down the Whig monopoly of preferments.

The policy of Queen Caroline was a great embarrassment to Gibson in the execution of his schemes. He had foreseen that his position would be seriously weakened if the influence of the new Court were used against him. Furthermore, the general attitude of the Court towards ecclesiastical questions seemed to him to be of singular disservice to the Church, at a time when its enemies were attacking it from all sides. The Deists and Freethinkers were propounding theories subversive of the very foundations of Christianity, yet the Court was encouraging clergy 'who were known to think differently from the constitution of the Church', that is, who were Latitudinarians. The Dissenters were pressing for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, and they were 'told by the Court, "you know our heart is with you, but we cannot do it yet", but not one word of the fitness of their sitting still and being content with the full enjoyment of their Toleration'.[2] A third onslaught was being delivered by the opposition in the House of Commons, who were joined in their tirades against the Church by many who 'were well with the Court, and had encouragement from it, and were as zealous as any in supporting the civil part of the Constitution'.[3] Meanwhile the Bench were the subject of virulent abuse by hack writers in the press on account of

[1] Leadam, *Political History of England*, 1702–60, p. 358.

[2] Gibson, 'Complaints usually made by the Bishops and Clergy', Gibson MSS. vii. 38.

[3] Gibson to Townshend, n.d., Gibson MSS. iv. 23.

their unanimity in support of the Administration, which was rewarded only by the mortification of seeing their opponents caressed by great personages of the Court. It was therefore high time for their Majesties openly to declare to their household 'that they were satisfied they had no security for themselves and their family but the maintaining the constitution in Church and State'.[1] Harassed almost to distraction by the constant attacks made upon him Gibson burst into passionate expostulation with Walpole: 'The hatred of Whig and Tory is like to continue the same' he wrote 'and if we are also to be the contempt of the Court, God help us'.[2] His complaint was not unreasonable. He was an unwearying defender of the Hanoverian dynasty and the Whig Administration, and for his pains was being 'tossed about and insulted by people of almost all denominations, many of whom were known to stand very well with the Court'.[3]

In the last resort Gibson's chances of successful resistance depended upon the cordiality of his relations with the Ministry. At the beginning of the new reign he had been continued in power by the instrumentality of Walpole and his position was based upon the confidence of the Prime Minister. If a serious disagreement arose between them his authority would vanish and his schemes collapse. At first sight the alliance seems somewhat unnatural, for the two men differed considerably both in character and policy. Walpole possessed something of the coarseness of manners, and insensibility to higher things, which were characteristic of his age. His policy was essentially one of peace and conciliation. His task was to stabilize the new dynasty and its Administration, to assuage the tempests of political and ecclesiastical factions, and to avoid awakening any latent animosities. Gibson was eager to embark upon a national crusade against blasphemy, immorality and profanity. He wished to restore the jurisdiction of ecclesiastical courts, and to commit the execution of the laws against vice and irreligion to the hierarchy. 'The age of

[1] Gibson, 'Queries concerning the Bishops and Clergy', Gibson MSS. vii. 13. See Appendix D, No. 2.
[2] Gibson to Walpole, n.d., Gibson MSS. iv. 19.
[3] Gibson to Walpole, 1736, ibid. iii. 60.

Walpole was an age of stagnation',[1] but the ideal of Gibson was a vigorous reformation. Nevertheless, despite these profoundly contradictory tendencies, Prime Minister and Prelate worked together for more than a decade in intimate alliance Bishop Hare, the former tutor of Walpole and always his friend, affirmed that there had existed between the two 'an intimacy and a confidence such as no ecclesiastic had had with a Minister in his time, nor would any have again, nor hardly any other person with him', and which had been grounded not only upon a long acquaintance but upon a thorough esteem.[2] Walpole's house had been open to Gibson as if it were his own, and the Bishop had visited him very frequently, more frequently indeed 'than the variety of business which the Bishop of London was necessarily engaged in would well allow'.[3] He quickly earned the title of 'Walpole's Pope', and the story is related by Horace Walpole that Sir Robert was at dinner one day with Lady Sundon, who asked him 'How does your Pope do? 'Madam', he replied, 'he is my Pope and shall be my Pope. Everybody has some Pope or other. Don't you know that you are one? They call you Pope Joan'.[4]

The real binding force of this association was Gibson's convinced political Whiggism. He believed that ever since the Revolution it had been 'the Whig interest, as supported by a competent number of bishops and clergy (which had) been the united strength upon which the Protestant cause had rested and stood its ground'.[5] There was no other basis upon which it could subsist. To the Whigs therefore was entrusted the task of preserving the liberties which they had won and the only way of discharging this solemn responsibility was to present an united front to the enemy. This strategic unity involved two things: 'the steady adherence of the Whig bishops and clergy to the lay Whigs, notwithstanding the reproaches from the Tory clergy and laity' and the no less essential 'readiness on the part of the lay Whigs to act in such

[1] Gwatkin, *Church and State in England to the Death of Queen Anne*, p. 392.
[2] Bp. Hare to Gibson, 7 Aug. 1736, Gibson MSS. iii. 72.
[3] Bp. Gibson to Hare, 4 Aug. 1736, ibid. iii. 71.
[4] *Letters of Horace Walpole*, ed. Paget Toynbee, i, p. 160.
[5] Gibson, 'Queries concerning the Bishops and Clergy', Gibson MSS. vii. 13.

a manner as should leave the Tory clergy no reasonable ground to accuse the Whig bishops and clergy of joining in measures with the enemies of the Church '.[1] Gibson's acceptance of the position of confidential adviser of the Ministry had cemented this alliance between clerical and lay Whigs. He regarded it as a duty to defend the Administration against its enemies, and there can be no doubt of his fidelity in the discharge of it. His purpose in filling the vacancies on the Bench with Whigs had been to strengthen the party interest where it was most needed, in the Church and in the Parliament, and the constant support which the bishops had given in the House of Lords had fulfilled his expectations.

Two outstanding instances will illustrate the loyalty of the Bishop of London and of his brethren. In consequence of the defection of a considerable number of lay Whigs who, being dissatisfied with the policy of Walpole, had joined forces with the Opposition in Parliament, there was some anxiety lest the Whig clergy also should waver in their allegiance. It was even reported that in the churches at Kensington and Hanover Square sermons had been preached referring to public affairs and giving countenance to the apostates. Gibson's action was decisive and prompt. He made inquiries into these specific charges, requesting copies of the offending discourses which he perused and found in them no just cause of complaint. Nevertheless he determined to exercise a greater vigilance, introduced particular exhortations to loyalty into his Visitation charge of 1731, and having made inquiries in his diocese, reported that 'the discontented party would not find any assistance from the pulpits', because 'the clergy looked upon Mr. P[ultene]y and his friends to be their greatest enemies, and were thoroughly sensible of their obligation to the Court on account of the protection they received from thence in the affair of the Tithe Bill'.[2] He assured the Ministry that he would

[1] Ibid. See Appendix D, No. 2.

[2] Bp. Gibson to the Duke of Newcastle, 15 July 1731, S. P. Dom. Geo. II, B. 23. The Bishop reported that at Kensington the sermon was 'a plain practical discourse upon ye behaviour of a Christian in the time of affliction, without the least glance at anything of a publick nature'. At Hanover Square the text was Esther v. 13: 'Yet all this availeth me nothing so long

be watchful and if 'he found anything of that spirit moving within his sphere, his behaviour should be such as he hoped would be to His Majesty's satisfaction'.

In the other case the support which the Bench gave to the Administration was more direct and immediate. The occasion was a severe attack made in the Lords in 1733 upon the conduct of the Government in the affair of the South Sea Company. The gravity of the situation lay in the fact that Walpole had just suffered a severe reverse in the Commons in regard to his Excise Scheme, so that a further defeat in the Upper House might undermine his whole position. The Opposition determined to take advantage of his weakness, and 'began to look round for some other point to squabble upon'.[1] They decided to press for an inquiry into the question of the South Sea Company, whether the money arising from the estates of the directors which had been forfeited in 1720 had been disposed of according to law. In anticipation of a tough struggle 'many Lords were closeted, schooled and tampered with by the Ministers, some by the King, and more by the Queen',[2] yet notwithstanding this the Government were in a perilous situation. The proposal that an account of the South Sea transaction should be laid before the House was introduced on May 17th by Lord Bathurst. After a spirited discussion, a motion for the adjournment of the debate was brought forward and defeated by 35 against 31, the original proposal being then carried without a division. On this occasion only seven bishops had cast their votes, the Bishop of London and five others with the Court, and Reynolds of Lincoln with the majority. The account was ordered to be brought in, and the consideration of it fixed for the 24th of May. The Ministry realized the insecurity of their position, and determined to muster the united forces of the Bench in their defence in order to ward off defeat. On the appointed day Lord Bathurst moved that the present account should be taken into considera-

as I see Mordecai, the Jew sitting in the King's gate'; and the discourse was against pride and ambition; but he did not find that any application to the present time was made by ye preacher or understood by ye audience'.

[1] Lord Hervey, *Memoirs of the Reign of George II*, i, p. 222.

[2] Ibid., p. 229.

tion by the House, but the Duke of Newcastle proposed that, since that account was obscure and inadequate, discussion should be postponed until another had been prepared. In the course of a long debate a further suggestion was made that Mr. De Golz, who had subscribed the account, should be called in to explain it, but it was decided first to vote on the original proposition and the amendment. Lord Bathurst's motion was negatived without division, and the Duke of Newcastle's amendment was selected for the trial of strength. Upon this there voted 75 on each side, no fewer than twenty-five bishops voting in person or by proxy, of whom all, save Lincoln, supported the Court. Without their votes there would have been a majority of twenty-two lay lords against the Government. Since there was not a majority for putting the question upon the motion of the Duke of Newcastle, according to the rules of procedure in the Lords, this question was carried in the negative, and the House proceeded to consider the calling in of De Golz, which discussion was adjourned until June 1st. On that day Lord Winchelsea's motion that the conduct of the directors was contrary to law was lost by 75 votes to 70, and on the morrow Lord Bathurst's proposal for the appointment of a Committee of Inquiry was negatived without a division.[1] After a prolonged and exhausting contest the Administration had succeeded in thwarting the designs of their enemies, but their deliverance from a damaging defeat had been due entirely to the support of the bishops. The meaning of these events was well understood by observers of politics. Because of their support of the Ministry the Bench were vigorously denounced as time-servers and creatures of Walpole.

> His creatures they're 'tis plain to see
> By voting stiff that no South Sea
> Inquiry should be made; for why?
> If they did once with that comply
> Egregious faults they would descry.[2]

Gibson was represented as bringing home to the Minister the

[1] Boyer, *Political State of Great Britain*, vol. xlvii, pp. 587–650.

[2] *The Bishop, or No Bishop: or the Disappointed Doctor*, London, n.d., C. Proctor, Gibson Pamphlets, vol. xiii, No. 17, Sion College.

moral of the episode, by making it plain that he owed everything on this occasion to his episcopal friends.

> Consider the Ch[ur]ch is your Rock of Defence.
> Your S[outh] Sea escape in your memory cherish,
> When sinking, you cry'd, 'Help, L[or]ds or I perish.'[1]

The clerical Whigs had fulfilled their part of the contract, but the lay Whigs had not been mindful of their obligations. They had shown a very imperfect understanding of the principle of reciprocity, for they could not resist the temptation to bait the clergy. Consequently Gibson was harassed by the continual attacks which were made upon the Church in the House of Commons in which a considerable number of the Court favourites bore a prominent part. The trouble had begun so long ago as April 1725, when the Bill for the building of fifty new churches had been quietly dropped, and thus the most promising of the schemes of Queen Anne's reign had come to an unfruitful end.[2] The Bishop of London had been sorely disappointed by this failure, which he considered most detrimental to the welfare of the Church. He had remonstrated indignantly with Townshend about the attitude of the Commons towards both Church and clergy, which seemed to be so hostile that 'it was not safe, if they could help it, to let anything come into Parliament relating to either, lest some peevish or spiteful motion of one kind or another should be grafted on to it'.[3] He had spoken so strongly to Walpole on the same subject, that the Prime Minister had taken offence at his words.[4] Nevertheless, 'the evil spirit that he saw working against Churchmen and Church matters' increased rather than subsided. The new Parliament, elected in 1727, proved worse than the old; 'the coldness and indignity' of its predecessor towards the Church were changed into aggressive and insulting hostility. An additional misfortune befell Gibson in the loss of the valuable support of Lord Townshend, who resigned office on 15th May

[1] 'The Knight and the Prelate', Political Ballads illustrating the Administration of Sir R. Walpole, M. Percival, No. 34.
[2] Boyer, *Political State of Great Britain*, vol. xxix, p. 356.
[3] Gibson to Townshend, n.d., Gibson MSS. iv. 23.
[4] Same to same, ibid., 24.

1730. The Bishop had done his utmost to persuade him to continue in the Ministry, by urging upon him the consideration that 'public affairs, and particularly the Church, would feel the want of his service and assistance to a great degree',[1] but his efforts had proved unavailing. Henceforth, Walpole and himself were left alone to face the violence of the rising storm.

The clergy were the objects of a series of sharp and damaging attacks during the latter half of the Parliament of 1727–33, which recalled the Reformation Parliament of Henry VIII in its zeal to attack the stronghold of clerical privilege and abuse. 'Since the Lollards there had never been a time when the ministers of religion were held in so much contempt as in the Hanoverian period, or when satire upon churchmen was as congenial to the general feeling,'[2] and the prevalent 'anti-Church' prejudice was faithfully reflected in the national representative assembly. The campaign was opened in 1730 by the introduction into the House of Commons on the 26th February of a Bill to prevent suits for tithes where none, nor any composition for the same, had been paid within a certain number of years. The effect of this would have been to deprive the parson of all claim to tithes, for the payment of which in recent years he could not produce documentary evidence or the testimony of accurate witnesses. Since there were numerous cases in which the transaction had been made by private arrangement, and without any written contract, the clergyman was in danger of losing his rights if his tithe payers were perfidious. The Bill secured a first reading, and on the 18th March was ordered to come up for a second in a month's time, during which period the Ministry exerted pressure to ensure its disappearance.[3]

In the same session, on the 4th March, a motion was made in the same House for leave to bring in a Bill to prevent Translations

[1] Gibson to Townshend, Coxe, *Memoirs of the Life of Walpole*, ii. 646.

[2] Mark Pattison in *Essays and Reviews*, p. 315.

[3] Boyer, *Political State of Great Britain*, vol. xlii, p. 259; Gibson to Duke of Newcastle, S. P. Dom. Geo. II, B. 23. Leave was given to introduce the Tithe Bill on 26th Feb.; the first reading was taken on 4th March and on the 18th, the second reading was ordered for a month hence. *Journals of the Commons*, 1730, vol. xx, pp. 650–80.

of bishops. This practice was vigorously attacked in press and pamphlet as tending to increase the temptations to worldliness of the episcopate, and as making the Bench too dependent upon the Crown. Its defenders in Parliament urged that the Bill 'would be a great encroachment upon the prerogative of the Crown and an injury to the rights of the clergy', and the Government majority managed to negative the motion.[1] It was evident that a spirit of considerable hostility towards the spiritual body was abroad, but for a space the unhappy Excise Scheme attracted the attention of the malcontents, and the Church was allowed a welcome respite.

The truce of God did not last long, for the enemy soon returned to the attack, with a determination increased by their recent defeat in the House of Lords. On the 9th April 1733 the faithful Commons consented to receive a Bill for the better regulating of proceedings in the Ecclesiastical Courts.[2] A more vulnerable point could hardly have been chosen, for even Convocation had on occasion been compelled to complain of their dilatory and expensive methods of procedure, whilst the difficulties of securing a decision in cases of discipline were almost proverbial. The full force of protest and denunciation was discharged against them. Orator Henley delivered a series of vehement tirades on the subject, and the ballad mongers rejoiced to proclaim the iniquity of the Courts which 'instead of reforming sought nothing but gain' so

> That were Judas alive he might lay by all fears
> And demand to be tried by his Sp[iri]t[ua]l P[ee]rs;

whilst these hypocritical ecclesiastics were represented as defending the system of organized avarice on the ground that,

> In our Courts on this maxim delinquents we fleece
> Take away but the cause, the effect soon must cease:
> Then since Money, all grant, sends the most to the Devil,
> We devoutly take from them that root of all evil.[3]

Meanwhile the Bill was pressed forward with ominous determination in the House of Commons. Its provisions were

[1] Boyer, *Political State*, vol. xlii, p. 466; *Journals of the Commons*, 1730, vol. xx, p. 660.
[2] Boyer, *Political State of Great Britain*, vol. xlvi, p. 520.
[3] 'The Knight and the Prelate', 1733, Percival, *Political Ballads*, No. 34.

intended to deprive the Ecclesiastical Courts of their powers of receiving suits styled pro Salute Animae or pro Reformatione Morum or for any criminal matter, which had been commenced by inquisition or denunciation, allowing only those which had been begun by accusation, wherein the informer was required to enter into a bond with sureties upon oath to prosecute the suit and to pay the defendant's costs if it were discontinued or the defendant acquitted. At any time before judgement the accused might suggest, without oath, that he was not guilty, and thereupon a prohibition might be granted by any of His Majesty's Courts of Record, and the case transferred to the decision of a jury of the county. Furthermore, there were clauses regulating the payment of commutation money, abolishing all civil disabilities upon excommunicated persons, and restraining the power of the ecclesiastical judge to issue out a citation for the proving of a will, except at the request of some relative of the deceased or of some person interested in his estate. The Bill was a thoroughgoing attack upon the jurisdiction of Ecclesiastical Courts and might well cause a panic among their defenders. It passed rapidly through the first and second readings, and was sent to a committee of the whole House. Their amendments were then debated, two attempts to delay the discussion being defeated by substantial majorities, and the third reading was passed on the 18th May. The House of Lords received it on the 21st, and gave it a second reading on the following day; but the influence of the Government was exercised to prevent its proceeding further, and it was quietly dropped. Nevertheless the rapidity of its passage through the Commons, and the general sympathy of laymen with its aims, were so notable that it was expected that 'the affair would be re-assumed in some future session, and a law would be passed'.[1]

During the progress of this Bill the Opposition had ventured to launch another bold attack, by the introduction on the

[1] Boyer, *Political State*, vol. xlvi, p. 527. The Bill was read a first time in the Commons on 9th April, and a second on the 18th. The report of the committee was presented to the House on 11th May, and considered on the 17th, when two attempts to adjourn the discussion were defeated by 115 to 51 and 57 to 37 respectively. The third reading was taken on the 18th and the Bill straightway sent up to the Lords. *Journal of the House of Commons*, vol. xxii, pp. 120–56.

25th April of a Bill for Settling Rates for the Better Repairing Churches and Chapels, and Providing Ornaments for the Same.[1] Hitherto, the method of procedure had been for the churchwardens to draw attention to the need of repairs in their presentments at Visitations, and when the sanction of the Ordinary had been obtained rates were levied and the payment of them enforced by the ecclesiastical judge. Now it was proposed that all rates for repairs and the provision of ornaments should be 'allowed and confirmed by the Justices' and by no other, so that prosecutions for failure to pay would henceforth be undertaken by warrant from them. This was not only a curtailment of the jurisdiction of the Ecclesiastical Courts, but also trespassed upon the prerogative of the Bishop, whose authority to command the execution of repairs presented at Visitations would be destroyed by the requirement that the justices should also give their approval.[2] The Bill, however, was carried forward through the first and second readings and the committee stage, and came up for the third reading on the 24th May. Then the Administration mustered their forces and succeeded in defeating it in the final vote.[3] Nevertheless, the victory was more apparent than real, for the episode was undeniable evidence of the strength and bitterness of the anti-Church fanaticism; and if this Parliament closed its sessions by such a demonstration, what could be expected from its successor, which was to be elected under such conditions of opposition and storm? It was indeed true that the clergy had become the butt of every man's ridicule, and that

> 'Twas the delight of every clown
> To level his derision at the Gown,
> A parson was the coxcomb's standing jest,
> Exposing whom he hoped to please the rest.[4]

[1] *Journal of the House of Commons*, vol. xxii, p. 127.

[2] Gibson, 'Remarks on a Bill. Intituled a Bill for settling Rates', &c., London, 1733 (Lambeth Library, 113, f. 18 (11)).

[3] The Church Rates Bill received a first reading on 25th April, and a second on 2nd May. On the 19th the committee presented its report, which was considered by the House on the 20th; the third reading was moved on the 24th, but the motion was negatived. *Journals of the Commons*, 1737, vol. xxii, pp. 127–63.

[4] 'The Parson Hunter', A. Dodd, London, 1731, Sion College, Bp. Gibson Pamphlets, vol. xiv, 19.

Under the pressure of these assaults, it is not surprising that Bishop Gibson was full of disquietude. The number and strength of the attacks were destroying his peace. He had expected to be the object of vituperation from the Tory party, both clerical and lay, and from the discontented Whigs, and was quite willing to endure this inconvenience if he were sure of the firm support of the Court and the ministerial majority in Parliament. But a considerable number of those who were known to be in favour at the Court, and who were exceeded by none in their zeal for the political schemes of the Government, joined hands with the Opposition when matters relating to the Church came up for discussion. The behaviour of many Whigs in the recent episodes in the House of Commons had given rise to a very general impression 'that they seemed to understand that if they went uniformly with the Court in matters relating to the State, they were at liberty to use the Church and the clergy as they pleased'.[1] Once again Gibson was moved to remonstrate with Walpole. The principles of the Whig party for a generation past, as he had first learned them in the household of his master, and had ever since faithfully adhered to them, had been the maintenance of 'the Protestant Succession, the Church Establishment and the Toleration'.[2] In order to achieve success in these aims the covenant had been concluded between the Church and the lay Whigs, and the present unanimity of the Bench in support of the Government was an argument in favour of their claim to a proportionately greater degree of protection from those whom they had so willingly served. Instead they were subject to irritating attacks in Parliament, and to spiteful insults in the highest circles of the Court. Therefore Gibson propounded a series of grave queries to the Prime Minister. He urged him to take into consideration the questions, whether 'the difficulties brought upon the Bench by their unanimity for the Court did not entitle them strongly to the protection of the Court', and 'whether any bishop, consistently with the duty he owed to his station and character, could endeavour or wish

[1] Gibson to Townshend, n.d., Gibson MSS. iv. 23.
[2] Gibson, 'My Case in Relation to the Ministry and the Whigs', ibid. 32.

that the Bench might be preserved in its present state of unanimity without proper assurances on the part of the Court that they should in all events be supported, and without actions suitable to such assurances, as there should be opportunity and occasion'?[1] The bishops had always been exposed to the criticism of the Tories, and had been compelled constantly to reassert their conviction that the Whigs were the true friends of the Church. How could they justify themselves to their clergy 'unless some restraint were laid upon the lay Whigs from speaking of Churchmen and Church matters in the unfriendly and disrespectful manner that many of them were known to do'? Above all, the leaders of the Whig party should consider whether they could maintain themselves without the goodwill of the clergy. 'If the lay Whigs should by their behaviour make the continuance of the union impracticable, could they stand as an interest by themselves, under a full charge by the whole body of bishops and clergy and the universities (which would of course be the case) of their being enemies to the Ecclesiastical Constitution?'[2] The policy which was being blindly pursued by the anti-clerical fanatics threatened to ruin the entire fabric of the alliance which Gibson had laboured diligently for a decade to construct. If they continued in this policy its result would be the letting in of the whole body of the Tories, which to Gibson was nothing less than the triumph of the party of rebellion.[3] There was still time to act, and to act vigorously. Otherwise it would soon be out of the power of the Court and Ministry to check that spirit of disunion and disintegration from which, 'in case it finally prevailed, could anything follow but a national confusion?' These warnings were especially important in relation to the present situation. The old Parliament was drawing to an end and the elections would soon be upon the country, in which the Government might find the influence of the bishops and clergy powerful for evil if turned against them. Yet, remembering the ill usage they had met with during the

[1] Gibson, 'Queries Concerning the Bishops and Clergy', Gibson MSS. vii. 13.
[2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.

present session, the Bench could not be expected 'to bear the reproach of being embarked with men whose behaviour on all occasions declared them to be unfriendly, and much less to assist and recommend them in the elections'.[1] Finally, Gibson felt it his duty to observe that, since the reproaches of the two archbishops and the Bishop of Winchester (Willis) fell upon him, so that he had to bear all the blame for the present unsatisfactory state of affairs, and for his failure to defend the Church from these onslaughts, he must request the Ministry to give serious attention to his complaints, and, if they dared not protect the Bench for fear of offending, or if they had not the power or the will so to do, to allow him to look to his own interests and to retire from a position of such difficulty and vexation.

The situation was critical, and there seemed to be a serious possibility of a breach between Walpole and his Pope; and behind all there was the problem of the coming election, the successful manipulation of which would be a task of extreme delicacy. On the one hand, the Administration could not afford to lose the support of the clergy; and on the other, it could not alienate any others of its friends by a definite act of favour to them. Suddenly the complications of the problem were increased greatly by the episode of the nomination of Dr. Rundle to the see of Gloucester, which aroused the most serious ecclesiastical controversy since the banishment of Atterbury. In assigning to this incident a position of such prominence it is difficult to avoid the appearance of exaggeration; yet in the opinion of Bishop Hare, writing to Gibson in 1736 after the affair of the Quakers' Bill, it was the unhappy affair of Rundle which had been 'the true cause of all the misunderstandings that had since followed' and 'had drawn on the bishops the licentious usage which they had since met with'.[2] To Gibson it was a most unwelcome and untimely difficulty. It was the hardest battle in which he was ever engaged, for he had the whole weight of the Talbot interest against him. Coming at a moment, also, when his relations

[1] Gibson MSS. iv. 23.

[2] Bp. Hare to Gibson, 2 Aug. 1736, Gibson MSS. iii. 70.

with Walpole were severely strained, and when the Minister could not face the forthcoming elections without the support of the clergy, it involved both parties in considerable perplexity.

It was certainly a very tough contest. Dr. Elias Sydal, one of Gibson's nominees, died on the 22nd December 1733, and in the following month public announcement was made of the nomination of Dr. Thomas Rundle to the vacant bishopric of Gloucester.[1] It was well known that the Lord Chancellor, Talbot, was responsible for this appointment, for the beneficiary had been a chaplain in the household of his father, and was a close personal friend of his own; but the Bishop of London set his face inflexibly against it. It will be necessary to consider this episode at greater length in its relation to Gibson's attitude towards the Latitudinarian clergy, so that it is sufficient here to observe that the grounds of his opposition were solely theological. There is no foundation whatever for the statement of Lord Hervey that

'the Bishop of London's sole reason for opposing Rundle was because the Lord Chancellor had made application to the Court in his favour, not through the Bishop of London, but merely upon his own weight and interest, and as the Bishop had always disliked what he called lay recommendations, he was determined to make a stand upon this occasion, thinking if he could show that even so great a man as the Lord Chancellor could not get any one preferred in the Church without applying to him, for the future no other person would attempt it.'[2]

Nevertheless, although Gibson's motive was purely theological, his action could not be divested of a political significance. The question might be fundamentally one of religious principle, but the form which it took was that of a contest between the influence with the Court and the Ministry, of the Bishop of London and of the Lord Chancellor. It was this which gave to the incident its peculiar prominence. The great nobles of the Court were little concerned with the maintenance of strict

[1] *Gent. Mag.*, Dec. 1733, p. 663, and Jan. 1734, p. 52.
[2] Lord Hervey, *Memoirs of the Reign of George II*, vol. i, p. 448.

orthodoxy among members of the Bench, but they were greatly interested in the contest between Talbot and Gibson.

The episode was, therefore, magnified until it became a *cause célèbre*. It was suggested by the enemies of the Bishop that, not content with eclipsing his ecclesiastical superiors—inasmuch as he himself said that 'the Archbishop had nothing to do but to make two dinners a week and to grant dispensations'[1]—he was now attempting to humble the highest Minister of State, the keeper of the King's conscience. The recently appointed Lord Chancellor, himself the son of a bishop, was the champion of laymen against the servitude of 'Church Power', and was determined not to yield one iota of his prerogative. Accordingly, the full force of the scribblers' invective was launched against Gibson. Even Lord Hervey, who had no tender feelings towards him, admitted that he 'was pelted with all the opprobrious language that malice and envy ever threw at eminence and power'.[2] Had he not written in the Codex that laymen were not proper persons to nominate to ecclesiastical benefices, and that the clergy themselves 'were the most proper judges of the assistance which the Church really needed (from the State) and the several degrees of it, and of the methods by which that assistance might be most effectually conveyed and applied'?[3] Had he not condemned the action of the Parliaments since the Reformation in 'taking the suppression of vice out of the hands of the Spiritualty (whose proper province it was and who were most like to pursue it) and putting it into the hands of the laity.', and demanded that it should be given back to the Ecclesiastical Courts?[4] Had he not made a determined attempt, during the period of the late Chancellor's tenure of office, to deprive him of all the patronage which was attached to that office; and was he not attempting a further encroachment upon the rights of the new Chancellor, before he had firmly established himself in his position?

These and many other charges were hurled against him in

[1] Bp. Hare to Gibson, 7 Aug. 1736, Gibson MSS. iii. 72.
[2] Hervey, *Memoirs*, i, p. 450.
[3] Preface to the *Codex*, p. xxx. [4] Ibid.

the multitude of pamphlets which were penned at the time. A great show of indignation was feigned that a proud priest should thus oppose the purpose of the Crown and of its adviser. 'Shall the first who is to feel the weight and direful effects of this aspiring ecclesiastic's great power and spiritual indignation, be no other than the noble and right honourable person whom His Majesty exalted to the highest civil office in the two kingdoms'? asked a zealous opponent of sacerdotal pretensions.[1] The old stories of the corruption and avarice of the hierarchy of the medieval church were retold with a new moral, and the glories of the laymen's Reformation extolled beyond measure. Not for a long time had the clergy received such a statement of accounts against them.[2] Nevertheless the Bishop of London maintained his position without flinching. The elevation of Rundle to the Bench could only be accomplished at the cost of his own resignation of all responsibility in the ecclesiastical administration. Nor would Lord Talbot on his part desert his friend. He would not give up 'the Bishop of Durham's, his own, and his friend's character upon any consideration', but would rather surrender the Great Seal

[1] 'An Argument proving that the Method taken for obstructing Dr. Rundle's advancement to the See of Gl . . . r, is dangerous to His Majesty's prerogative, our most excellent Constitution, the Liberty of Lay Subjects and the Christian Religion', London, J. Wilford, 1736.

[2] Cf. also: 'The Extraordinary Claims of the Clergy repugnant to Reason and Christianity', London, 1735; 'The Case of Dr. Rundle's Promotion to the See of Gloucester impartially considered', London, T. Cooper, 1734; 'Some Seasonable Remarks upon a pamphlet entitled "The Reasons alleged against Dr. Rundle's Promotion to the See of Gloucester seriously and dispassionately considered"', London, A. Dodd, 1735; 'Remarks on a letter in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of February last concerning excepting against the confirmation of a bishop', London, T. Cooper, 1735; 'The Reasons against Dr. Rundle's Promotion seriously and dispassionately considered', London, 1734; 'An Examination of the scheme of Church Power laid down in the Codex', Sir M. Foster, London, 1735; 'An Answer to a late pamphlet entitled "An examination", &c.', London, 1735; 'Notes on "An Answer to a late pamphlet", by A Student of the Inner Temple', London, 1736; 'A letter to the Rev. Dr. Codex on the subject of his modest instruction to the Crown inserted in the *Daily Journal* of February 27th, 1733, by Will Arnall'; 'The Powers claim'd by the hierarchy examined: by a Physician', London, 1735; 'Dr. Codex no Christian', by Noah Cholmondeley, London, 1737; 'A Second Letter to Dr. Codex, to which are added critical notes and observations on the laborious works of that great man', London, 1734; 'The Necessary Respondent: or a full, clear and adequate answer to a late scurrilous and vile invective', London, 1734.

itself.[1] Walpole prolonged the vacancy for a whole year, until the crisis of the elections was safely past, and finally, at the end of December 1734, the appointment of Archdeacon Martin Benson showed that Gibson had gained his point.[2] The Prime Minister had yielded to the prelate, and sacrificed the Chancellor.

Gibson had certainly secured a signal success. Straightway a fresh campaign of abuse was inaugurated against him, inspired by the realization of his authority and the pretended fear of its exercise.

> Hence the depending mitre still
> Shall wait the sanction of my will.
> The conscience of a King's a charge
> For lay capacity too large,
> It claims the genius of Divine
> And talents exquisite as mine.
> 'Squire R[u]nd[e]ll's motto is hic jacet,
> On him I fix my firm Non placet;
> As well might Mah'met raise the dead
> As they whom I have doom'd succeed.[3]

The new outcry was that of 'The State in danger'. It was pretended that Dr. Codex was perfecting that very scheme 'for making the Church independent of the State and exempting the clergy from the jurisdiction of the lay magistrate' which had brought Laud to the block.[4] In the satire depicting the triumphal progress of Gibson to Canterbury, laymen were presented with the unhappy spectacle of the State riding on the hinder part of an ass with the Church in front, typifying the reversal of the positions of the two contending powers.

> Next, then, behold the Church triumphant
> Bestrides her beast, and on the rump on't
> Sits face to tail . . .

[1] Dr. Alured Clarke to Lady Sundon, 15 Dec. 1734, *Memoirs of Lady Sundon*, vol. ii, p. 249.

[2] *Gent. Mag.*, Dec. 1734, p. 704.

[3] '"Dr. Codex's Fifth Pastoral", Humbly addressed to the people of every diocese in Great Britain and Ireland: Quis custodiet ipsos custodes', London, T. Cooper, 1734, Sion College Library, Bishop Gibson Pamphlets, xv. 16.

[4] 'The Parallel: or Laud and C-d-x compared', London, 1736, *B.M. Catalogue of Prints and Drawings*, iii. 2280.

> The State, by pious frauds o'ercome,
> Arm'd with a spindle and a distaff
> Which, as he rides, she makes him twist off,
> And when he loiters, o'er her shoulder
> Chastises Reformado Soldier.[1]

It was even whispered that the Bishop of London might find it hard to escape a parliamentary censure, and on all hands 'Church Power was openly complained of as a national grievance', with which the Parliament must deal in drastic fashion.[2] Attention was, therefore, directed towards the proceedings of the newly-elected body in order to discern its temper and attitude towards Churchmen.

The danger of the promotion of a Latitudinarian to the episcopate had not resulted in the return to Parliament of a body of zealous and watchful defenders of the Church establishment, nor had the support which the clergy had given to the Government candidates secured to them any recompense of gratitude. The new assembly soon proved itself more unfriendly than its predecessor. From the first its chief discussions were on ecclesiastical topics; 'all the considerable debates that passed this year in parliament', wrote Lord Hervey of the session of 1735–6, 'were upon Church matters, and Parliament, like bull-dogs, sticking close to any hold on which they had once fastened, the poor Church was this winter as much worried as Sir Robert had been any other.'[3] The first important business was the attempt of the Dissenters to procure the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts. This they regarded as a tardy measure of justice, due to them for

[1] 'The Hierarchical Skimington', London, 1735, B.M. Catalogue of Prints and Drawings, vol. iii., 2149; cf. 'The Church too hard for the State, or The Knight Overthrown' (Sion College, Bp. Gibson Pamphlets, xi. 15), where the charge is that the clergy

> From the Civil Power deny
> That they their functions do enjoy.
> Their call from thence disown with passion
> And boast one of their own Creation,
> Strive to shake off such shameful fetters,
> Nor deign to own on earth their betters.

[2] Gibson, 'Doubts concerning the Archbishop's late letter to the Bishops of his Province', MSS. St. Paul's Library, 17, B. 15.

[3] Lord Hervey, *Memoirs of the Reign of George II*, ii. 87.

their continual support of the Whig Administration since the Revolution, and particularly at this juncture because of their loyalty during the recent elections. Therefore they persisted in introducing their motion into the House of Commons, despite the warning which they had received from Walpole that he would be compelled to oppose it. Bishop Gibson was uncompromising on this matter, and the Prime Minister felt that the danger was too great. Accordingly he rallied his supporters to defeat it in the Commons, and thus gave the last crumb of comfort to his faithful prelate.[1] But the victory was truly of the Pyrrhic sort. The Parliament had rejected the petition of the Dissenters, only to turn the violence of their wrath against the Church. In March 1736 two Bills were introduced into the House of Commons, the Mortmain, and the Quakers' Tithe Bill, which were directed straightly against the clergy. On March 5th the Master of the Rolls ' moved for leave to bring in a Bill to restrain the disposition of lands, whereby the same become unalienable.'[2] The Bill was introduced on the 10th and passed its first reading, coming up for the second on the 18th, when it was referred to a Committee of the whole House. Its provisions were unusually stringent, making it unlawful to give lands, or money for purchasing lands, for ' charitable uses ', unless the conveyance should be executed twelve months before the donor's death ; but the Commons showed no desire to modify them appreciably. Petitions against the Bill were presented by the two Universities, the Governors of the Charity for the Relief of the Poor Widows and Children of Clergymen, the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty, the Greycoat Hospital in Tothill Fields, and the Trustees of the Charity Schools of London, Westminster, the Borough of Southwark, and the Bills of Mortality ; in response to which a clause was inserted in the Bill excepting the Universities, and the Colleges of Eton, Winchester, and Westminster from its provisions. All the others were rejected, the question of that of the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty being debated, and, on a motion to include this Corporation in the

[1] The motion was negatived by 251 votes to 123 in the Commons.
[2] Boyer, *Political State of Great Britain*, vol. li, pp. 506–18.

exceptions, defeated by 143 votes to 95. On May 15th the third reading was carried by 176 to 72.

The Commons' debates had given alarming evidence of the prevalence of a strong anti-Church feeling, for all who had spoken for the Bill 'gave the bishops and parsons very hard as well as very popular slaps',[1] despite the attempts made by Walpole to restrain the violence of the Opposition. In the Lords the case was even worse. 'There the bishops had the mortification of having all the severe things said to their faces which they had before been sufficiently mortified in barely hearing had been said.'[2] The first reading was taken on April 16th, the second on the 20th, and the Bill reached the Committee stage on May 5th, when the chief debates took place. The Bishop of London, introducing a petition on behalf of the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty,

'said those concerned in his petition wanted to be informed as to the law, etc., which gave a handle to the Duke of Argyll to say, that, as his lordship was at the head of those concerned in that petition and was the author of that memorable work called The Codex, he was surprised that they should pretend to be ignorant of the law, having so able an instructor, and one whose other works in politics and divinity were also by this time near two v[olume]s in folio more'.[3]

The Lord Chief Justice Hardwicke was more outspoken, for 'he expressly said that there were many things in two books written by the Bishop of London, or by his order, contrary to law, and that in those books powers were asserted to be in the Church which did not belong to it'.[4] Furthermore he observed that the clergy already possessed a just proportion of the property of the nation, which, although it was unequally distributed, nevertheless 'if pluralities were taken away and other regulations made, which he hoped to see done, it would create preferments for those who were now the real objects of distress'.[5] Lord Hervey took advantage of the discomfiture of the Bench to level his jibes at their order, professing in his

[1] Lord Hervey, *Memoirs of the Reign of George II*, vol. ii, p. 94.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Sir Thomas Robinson to Lord Carlisle, Carlisle MSS., pp. 168–9.
[4] Hervey, *Memoirs*, vol. ii, p. 94. [5] Carlisle MSS., ibid. p. 169.

speech ' to lay open all the mismanagements of the fund called Queen Anne's Bounty ', and observing with approval that ' one of the greatest intentions of the Bill before them was to prevent the erroneous judgements of dying cowardice, to prevent persons on their death beds making their families miserable from the mistaken notion of saving their souls by donations to the Church '.[1] Fortified by these strong words, the promoters of the Bill pushed it forward with vigour. Bishop Sherlock strove to secure the insertion of an explanatory clause in favour of the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty, but his proposal, together with a similar motion to exempt other recent charitable foundations from the stringencies of the measure, was negatived decisively. Thus the Bill passed its third reading on May 13th, and the laity had achieved their victory.

The enemies of the hierarchy might well congratulate themselves that ' there was a spirit of liberty against Church encroachments, (which) must give pleasure to every true lover of his country '.[2] The Bishop of London in particular had received a very rough handling, so that in the next scuffle an opportunity might be found to administer the *coup de grâce*. The occasion speedily presented itself in the affair of the Quakers' Tithe Bill, the parallel measure to the Mortmain Act, which was introduced with the official support of the Government. Walpole felt that he must do something to requite the favours of the Quakers, whose interest was particularly strong in Norfolk and had always been exercised in his support at elections. In addition he was a sincere lover of toleration and opposed to all appearance of persecution in religious matters, so that he was impelled by a double motive to do something for their relief.[3] Accordingly he lent a willing ear to their complaints of the excessive charges and inconvenience to which they were subjected by being sued for the payment of tithes in the Ecclesiastical Courts. By an Act of 7–8 William III, the clergy had been allowed to bring suits for the payments of

[1] Lord Hervey, *Memoirs of the Reign of George II*, vol. ii, p. 94; Sir Thomas Robinson to Lord Carlisle, Carlisle MSS., p. 169.

[2] Carlisle MSS., p. 169.

[3] Coxe, *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Robert Walpole*, vol. i, p. 478.

tithes under the value of ten pounds before the Justices of the Peace for the County, but the option of having recourse instead either to the Ecclesiastical Courts or to the Courts of Equity in Westminster Hall had been still reserved to them. The Quakers were complaining now that the clergy, by refusing to avail themselves of the alternative provided, were laying unnecessary expense and persecution upon them, by the prolonged suits which they commenced in the superior courts. The Bill which the Government introduced was intended to meet this grievance by making it compulsory for the parson to bring his case before the Justices of the Peace. There was no idea of absolving the Quaker from payment, but the aim was to devise an inexpensive method of conducting the prosecution against him. The House of Commons accordingly gave a first reading to the Tithe Bill on March 17th. Immediately petitions from the clergy in all parts of the kingdom began to pour in. No fewer than thirty-eight were presented,[1] and it was decided that Counsel for the clergy of both Provinces should be heard at the second reading. On April 12th, therefore, the second reading was moved. The Counsel for the Southern Province spoke first, being answered by the Counsel for the Bill, whilst the Counsel for the Northern Province was allowed the right of final reply. Upon a division there voted 221 for the second reading and 84 against it. It was in the Committee stage, however, that the real contests occurred. A proposal to grant the clergy the option of making suit either before the Justices of the Peace of the county, or in any of His Majesty's Courts in Westminster Hall was decisively rejected by 202 votes to 96. The amendments which were accepted all tended in the opposite direction. The jurisdiction of the Justices of the Peace was extended to all tithes, of whatever value, so long as the title was not called in question. In all the divisions the Government carried their point 'by a very great majority'.[2] The third reading was taken on May 3rd, and, despite a determined effort of the opposition, a majority of 116 was secured (164 votes to 48).

[1] Boyer, *Political State of Great Britain*, vol. li, pp. 439–47; a list of the petitions is there given, pp. 439 seq.

[2] Lord Morpeth to the Earl of Carlisle, Carlisle MSS., p. 171.

Meanwhile pamphlets on the question had poured forth in amazing volume. Bishop Sherlock had contributed the ablest defence of the clergy, and Lord Hervey had replied by supporting the Quakers, not forgetting to deal faithfully with the avarice and arrogance of the priesthood.[1] Bishop Gibson was most active in his efforts to secure the defeat of the measure.[2] He regarded it as an attempt to deprive the parson of his legal right to tithes, for he affirmed that it was only the fear of the expensive suit in Westminster Hall which induced the Quaker to pay at all. Also it was now proposed to throw upon the parson the *onus probandi*; whereas formerly it had been required that the tithe payer should establish his claims to exemption, or else make proper payment of his dues.[3] The pretended scruples of conscience which were urged in extenuation of the Quaker's plea were to Gibson merely a hypocritical cry to conceal the real intention, which was to demolish the entire fabric of the National Establishment. Nevertheless the Bill was carried to the House of Lords with a very good prospect of passing into law. It was realized that the attitude of the Court would exercise a powerful influence upon the issue, and when it was perceived that the alarum raised by the bishops had been received with resentment there, the word was passed round that the Bill was safe because 'the Court would not suffer any alterations to be made to it in the House of Lords, so that there was no danger from the Bench'.[4] The great struggle occurred on the occasion of the second reading on May 12th. The bishops assailed it vehemently as a matter of course, but to the general surprise both the Lord Chancellor and the Lord Chief

[1] Sherlock, 'The Country Parson's Plea'; Lord Hervey, 'The Quaker's Reply to the Country Parson's Plea.'

[2] Cf. 'The Parallel', *B.M. Catalogues of Prints and Drawings*, vol. iii, No. 2280. C-d-x to the clergy:

> Brethren, take heed, your sacred Rights maintain,
> Lose not a tenth, for godliness is gain.
> Our cause is ruined if our wealth is lost,
> And Quakers established at the Church's cost.

Even Pyle (*Memoirs of a Royal Chaplain*, p. 69) could write: 'We fight pro aris et focis, therefore men of Israel help.'

[3] The text of the Quaker's Bill with MSS. notes in Gibson's hand, Gibson MSS., Miscellaneous, No. 9.

[4] Lord Morpeth to the Earl of Carlisle, Carlisle MSS., p. 171.

Justice, Hardwicke, joined the opposition, on the ground that, although the intention of the Bill was commendable, its actual proposals were impracticable. After a long debate the division was taken and the Government were defeated by 54 votes to 35. An examination of the division lists reveals several interesting particulars. Among the majority there had voted the two law lords, and fifteen bishops, including Gibson, Sherlock, and Potter of Oxford. The names of the two archbishops and of Bishop Hoadly did not occur among the number of those who had voted.[1]

The victory of the Churchmen was illusory. They had little reason to congratulate themselves upon the results of the session, for 'they had never so strong reason to believe the decay of their interest in the kingdom, as that winter'.[2] The Church had ceased to ride on the crest of the wave, and now it was further weakened by the loss of its chief defender. The differences of opinion which had long been increasing between Walpole and Gibson had broken out at length into open disagreement, and a decisive rupture had ensued.

It is difficult to reconstruct the exact details of the episode from the contradictory accounts which have been preserved. Both parties recognized its importance, and strove hard to justify each his own conduct and attitude.[3] The Prime Minister complained loudly of the unworthy treatment he had received and protested his innocence of any intention to quarrel with Gibson. He declared to his friend Bishop Hare 'that never man was more cruelly used' than he was by his trusted counsellor 'to break so abruptly with him after all the intimacy there had been for so many years between them'.[4] Indeed,

[1] Boyer, *Political State*, vol. li, p. 504.

[2] Lord Hervey, *Memoirs*, vol. ii, p. 96.

[3] The importance which Gibson attached to the episode is shown by the number of explanations of his conduct which he wrote: e. g. 'An answer to the Objections of my breaking abruptly with Sir R. Walpole', Gibson MSS. iii. 62; 'Complaints on the part of the Bishop of London', ibid., 63; 'The Case of the Bishop of London's retiring from publick business', ibid., 65; 'Notes on the Quaker's Bill', ibid., 66; 'Correspondence with Bishop Hare', ibid., 70–5; 'The Bishop of London's Complaints of ill usage', ibid., iv. 31; 'Two letters to Sir R. Walpole', ibid., iii. 60–1; 'Letter to the Duke of Newcastle', B.M. Add. MS. 32695, No. 150.

[4] Bp. Hare to Gibson, 2 Aug. 1736, Gibson MSS. iii. 70.

'upon reflecting on what had passed, he thought he saw that Gibson had for some time had a mind to break with the Court, and watched for a proper opportunity, and, therefore, laid hold on this.'[1] Not one word had passed between them concerning the action which the bishops had decided upon at their deliberations. Walpole's feeling on the matter was certainly that he had been badly treated. Lord Hervey, on the other hand, placed a much more sinister interpretation upon the bishop's conduct. 'The Bishop of London', in his judgement, 'was a man of so haughty, so insolent, and so sour a disposition, as no man was ever more ungrateful to his superiors and benefactors, more assuming among his equals or more oppressive towards his inferiors.' Accordingly he had deliberately avoided all communication with the Prime Minister upon the question of the Quakers' Bill, and instead had determined to raise up the clergy against it, in order to show the Court that they were impotent against him. The real motive of his opposition was personal jealousy. He had demanded an assurance from Walpole that, when he, Gibson, succeeded to Canterbury, Sherlock should not upon any consideration be translated to London. This request had been refused because though the Minister could maintain his Pope at Lambeth and continue to give him his entire confidence, he could not prevent the Queen from sending Sherlock to Fulham. Therefore, the Bishop of London had determined to go into Opposition, in order either 'to enforce the Court into his measures and to comply with his terms', or else 'to ingratiate himself with the clergy and hide the true state of this rupture, as to have them and all the world imagine that it was produced on ecclesiastical points and not on personal jealousy'.[2] Agreeably to this policy, he had seized upon the opportunity thus afforded to embark upon a definite line of action, compelling the other bishops to follow him. He had already dispatched a letter to his own clergy before the meeting of bishops was held, and had then persuaded them to do likewise in their own dioceses, so that he was both the leader of the conspiracy and the very

[1] Hare to Gibson, 7 Aug. 1736, ibid., No. 72. See Appendix C, Nos. 1–4.
[2] Lord Hervey, *Memoirs of the Reign of George II*, vol. ii, pp. 106–7.

author of the episcopal letter which was circulated throughout the kingdom.[1]

Both these accounts are ex-parte statements. Walpole's complaints were evidently provoked by his chagrin at the failure of his cherished scheme. 'Few circumstances ever ruffled his temper or affected his equanimity more than the rejection of this Bill.'[2] Lord Hervey, on the other hand, had so great an animus against the clergy in general, and the Bishop of London in particular, that he could never endure to give him his due. The statements of both witnesses must be carefully tested by the accounts left by Gibson himself. In the first place Gibson asserted in the strongest manner possible that 'he had not the least thought of breaking with him (Walpole) when the Quakers' Bill came into the House of Commons'.[3] This was clearly expressed in the very last letter which he addressed to the Prime Minister, in which he said that, despite the vexation and uneasiness of his situation during the last few years 'he had resolved to go on, with an eye to a time in view, when it might probably be in his power (if it should be in his inclination, and the face of affairs should make it eligible) to go out quietly, without offence and without ruffle'.[4] So far was he from seeking a pretext for withdrawal, that nobody was more surprised than himself by the unexpected sequence of events. The Quakers' Bill was introduced into the Commons without the least intimation from the Government to the bishops. Although there was such a close alliance between Walpole and Gibson, the former never mentioned his intentions in this regard to his episcopal colleague. Consequently the bishops understood this silence to mean that they were free to follow their own policy. 'The truth was, the Ministry had unwarily espoused the Bill, and the bishops did not think it consistent with their duty to sit still.'[5] Therefore,

[1] Lord Hervey, *Memoirs of the Reign of George II*, vol. ii, p. 92.

[2] Coxe, *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Robert Walpole*, vol. i, p. 478.

[3] Gibson, 'An Answer to the Objections of my breaking suddenly with Sir Robert Walpole', Gibson MSS. iii. 62. See Appendix D, No. 3.

[4] Gibson, 'My last letter to Walpole', n.d., ibid., No. 61. See Appendix D, No. 5.

[5] Bp. Gibson to Bp. Hare, 10 Aug. 1736, ibid., No. 73.

they met together to concert defensive measures. At their meeting Bishop Sherlock hinted at 'some expedients which the Ministry had thought on for the security of the clergy', and after a free discussion of the situation he was desired to transmit this answer in writing, that 'it was the general sense, that no assent could be given to any proposals till they were reduced to writing with the clauses and provisions thereto relating'.[1] Hereupon they waited for the transmission of written proposals, but, hearing no more of them, they went on in their own way. A singular unanimity characterized all their decisions, and no one was more eager for a spirited policy than Potter of Oxford.[2] It was determined to send an episcopal letter to the clergy of every diocese 'to acquaint them with what was going on, and to advise them to represent their sense of it to their friends in Parliament and to petition to be heard by Counsel'.[3] The form of the letter was drawn up by common consent, and, after announcing the forthcoming introduction of the Bill into the Commons, proceeded to declare that 'it was apprehended that this might in many cases prove a great hardship upon the parochial clergy, and if they and their neighbouring incumbents were of the same opinion, it would be convenient that they [should] take the first opportunity to signify their sense of it by letters to such members [of the House of Commons] as they were acquainted with, and particularly to their own representatives'.[4] Having thus deliberated, the bishops broke up their meetings and began the work of organizing petitions of the clergy in the various parts of the kingdom. Hitherto the Bishop of London had only seen Sir Robert Walpole once, the day before the first meeting had been held,[5] and no communication whatsoever had passed between them

[1] Gibson, 'Notes on the Affair of the Quakers' Bill', ibid., No. 66.

[2] Gibson to Hare, 4 Aug. 1736. All the bishops were involved in the measures taken to defeat the Bill, 'and no one deeper than our good brother of Oxford', ibid., No. 71.

[3] Gibson, 'Notes on the Affair of the Quakers' Bill', ibid., No. 66.

[4] Gibson's letter to his clergy, Miscellaneous, No. 104, i, dated 9 March 1735/6.

[5] Bp. Hare to Gibson, 7 Aug. 1736, says that Gibson saw Walpole 'but ye day before ye first meeting', Gibson MSS. iii. 72. Lord Hervey asserts that he 'went directly out of Sir Robert Walpole's house' to the meeting, *Memoirs*: vol. ii, p. 89.

on this matter. Knowing, however, that the Administration were engaged in favour of the Bill, Gibson had resolved 'to embark wholly with his brethren and not to give any ground to suspect his acting in any respect separately from them, or his discovering what had passed among them'.[1] Therefore he neither spoke nor wrote to the Prime Minister in relation to his opposition. The result of the concerted action of the bishops was seen in the thirty-eight petitions which were presented to the House of Commons and in the vigorous opposition which was offered in the Lords.

Upon this particular measure the Government and the Bench were evidently in complete antagonism. Yet this fact in itself need not have caused a permanent rupture between Gibson and Walpole; nor did the subsequent breach actually result from it. If nothing further had happened, the Ministry 'might have gone on to act according to their engagement' and the bishops 'according to their duty, and both might have mutually borne with each other and no harm had been done'.[2] Even if Walpole had thought 'that the Bench should indulge him in favouring the Bill, he could not mean that the bishops also should not be indulged in opposing it; and if things had gone upon the foot of a mutual indulgence, no breach could have ensued'.[3] The situation had been aggravated by the misrepresentations of Gibson's conduct which were circulated at Court. The meetings of the bishops 'were represented at Court and at other places as irregular and seditious and himself as at the head of it, and as drawing the other bishops into the irregularity and sedition'.[4] The charges against him were threefold; that the meetings themselves were seditious, since they were evidence of 'an undutiful distrust of the King's care of the Church, and implied that His Majesty could suffer any Bill to pass into law that was prejudicial to the Church and clergy'; [5] that he himself had dispatched a letter to his clergy

[1] Gibson, 'Notes on the Affair of the Quakers' Bill', iii. 66.
[2] Gibson to Hare, 10 Aug. 1736, Gibson MSS. iii. 73.
[3] Gibson to the Duke of Newcastle, B.M. Add. MS. 32695, No. 150.
[4] Gibson, 'An Answer to the objection of my breaking abruptly with Sir R. Walpole', iii. 62.
[5] Gibson, 'Complaints on the part of the Bishop of London', iii. 63.

before the bishops had ever met to discuss the problem ; and that upon their meeting he had been ' the ringleader of sedition ' by persuading them to approve his letter, and support his policy, so that they were ' unwarily drawn into the snare '.

The first accusation was evidently ridiculous. It was the duty of the bishops to watch the interests of their clergy, and to take counsel together in order to defeat any attempts to deprive them of their rights ; and in view of the recent activities of the committees of the Dissenting bodies in reference to the motion for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, not to mention the yearly meetings of the Quakers and their standing committee in London, it would be surprising if the only body which was not allowed the privilege of conference was the Bench. Furthermore, their opposition was so far removed from the suspicion of being a reflection upon His Majesty, whom Gibson had always believed to be ' by principle and inclination a hearty friend to the constitution of the Church ', that it actually ' freed him from the difficulty of denying the Royal Assent to a Bill after having passed both Houses of Parliament '.[1] With regard to the statement that the Bishop of London had dispatched his letter to the clergy antecedently to the resolution taken by his brethren, it was ' false and groundless '.[2] He met it with a firm and unqualified denial ; and there is no reason to doubt the veracity of his

[1] Gibson, ' The Bishop of London's Complaints of Ill Usage ', iv. 31.

[2] Lord Hervey's statement is : ' Lord Hervey detected him (Gibson) in this flat lie to Sir Robert Walpole, by having got into his hands an original letter of the Bishop of London's to one of his clergy of a date three days prior to the meeting at the Archbishop's and conceived almost word for word in the same terms with the copy there agreed to ; which shewed that the general letter was of his concerting and that to act the first rôle on this occasion he had anticipated with his own clergy the compliment which the other bishops paid in a lump ' (*Memoirs*, vol. ii, p. 92). *Gibson* definitely denies this : ' It was given out (most falsely yet confidently) that the Bishop of London's letters were sent before ye resolution taken by ye bishops ' (' Complaints on the part of the Bishop of London ', iii. 63) ; and : ' The Bishop of London was represented : first as having written his letter to the clergy antecedent to the resolution taken by the bishops ; and then to have drawn the bishops to do as he had done in order to gain countenance for a step which he had taken rashly and of his own head. Both which facts are false and groundless ' (' The Bishop of London's Complaints of Ill Usage ', iv. 31). It is impossible to harmonize these two assertions, and it is probable that credence must be given to the testimony of the bishop against that of the lay peer.

statement. It followed from this, that he had not led his brethren 'unwarily into the snare', but that they must bear their share of responsibility for an act in which they had been active participators.

This, however, did not dispose satisfactorily of the question as to whether he had not been the leading actor, and whether his influence had not drawn some of the bishops into approval of his policy. It was true that their decisions had been arrived at unanimously, and assented to by some over whom he 'had not the least influence'.[1] Also it was noteworthy that at their meetings nobody had so much as mentioned the point of the attitude of the Ministry towards their deliberations, whether they would view them with approval or the reverse.[2] But it was possible that several bishops had given a ready assent because they thought that Gibson, by reason of his friendship with the Prime Minister, would not take any step which was displeasing to him. This was certainly the case of the Bishop of Chichester. He had recognized the Bishop of London as leader because 'his station (in the present circumstances of the two archbishops) and his constant vigilance for the Church unavoidably made him so'. Therefore he had cordially supported his proposals, 'which he would never have done, had he suspected it would have given offence, which he had no apprehension it would, when the mover was one in such credit with Sir Robert and whom he knew to be so well intentioned to him.'[3] It was only after the episcopal letter had been sent that he learned from the Prime Minister himself that 'offence was taken at their meetings', whereupon he immediately conveyed this information to Gibson and pressed him to interview the Ministry forthwith. Thus it is not possible to acquit the Bishop of London of the responsibility of leading the defensive campaign, nor to deny the probability that some of his brethren had followed without question, because they believed that his action would not cause offence to the Government. Once they had committed themselves, they were compelled to go on, but they

[1] 'An answer to the objections of my breaking abruptly with Sir Robert Walpole', Gibson MSS. iii. 62.
[2] Gibson to Hare, 10 Aug. 1736, iii. 73.
[3] Hare to Gibson, 7 Aug. 1736, iii. 72.

hastened to make their peace with the Court after the defeat of the Bill, and to enter into a pact of mutual forgiveness and reconciliation.

From these overtures Gibson stood markedly aloof. When he heard the calumnies which were being spoken against him at Court, where the title of 'ringleader of sedition' was being freely applied to him, he determined to break the long silence by writing to Walpole to see if the latter had any explanation of these misrepresentations to offer. He expressed his regret in the first place that 'his zeal and stiffness in Church matters had in more instances than one occasioned great uneasiness' to the Ministry, but confessed that although 'his notions as to the obligation of conscience which his station and character laid him under to exert himself in defence of the Church and clergy, and how far he might, and ought to go, when he saw them attacked, might perhaps be thought too strict and narrow', yet 'they were notions that had grown up with him and such as were like to live and die with him'. Nevertheless, even if his own theories were apt to be too rigid and uncompromising, he had felt sure of his ground when acting 'in pursuance of a joint and unanimous agreement among the Bench of Bishops'. But he had found that 'this step, however innocent it was judged, had been strangely represented at Court and elsewhere'.[1] Thus he laid his formal complaint before the Prime Minister. He had deliberately avoided saying anything which might provoke an angry or insulting reply, but had intended this remonstrance to give his friend an opportunity of dissociating himself from the reports which were being spread abroad. Unfortunately, though Sir Robert 'might have set all things right by declaring that he had no hand in it, nothing like this was said by him or for him'.[2] Instead, the animosity against the Bishop of London at Court was intensified. 'The King with his usual softness in speaking of any people he disliked, called the bishops, whenever he mentioned them in private on this occasion, a parcel of black,

[1] Gibson to Walpole, Gibson MSS. n.d., iii. 60.

[2] 'An answer to the Objections of my breaking abruptly with Sir Robert Walpole', iii. 62.

canting, hypocritical rascals,'[1] whilst of Gibson in particular his words were framed 'in a style not fit to be mentioned'.[2] By the same propagation of calumnies, the whole body of Whigs were inflamed against Gibson, being 'industriously led to look upon this proceeding (placed solely to the bishop's account) as rash, imprudent, heady and what not?'[3] In such circumstances, the only course open to him was the severance of all official connexion with the Government. In face of such hostility and resentment he could not hope any longer to retain the confidence of the Crown, or to receive the support of the party. 'Unless it could be fairly said that Sir Robert had not the chief part in those hard representations, by which he found himself lost in the opinion of the Court, he had no choice left but whether he would walk out of the room of his own account or be turned out.'[4] Since the Prime Minister did not vouchsafe any reply to his first letter, he concluded that 'the facts on which his complaint was grounded were true', and therefore dispatched a second and final communication in which he announced his resolution to retire. In this he made it quite clear that his decision had not been long premeditated, but had been forced upon him by the recent events, which had given him the character of a 'weak, wilful and unpracticable man'. The virulent abuse which had been heaped upon him, and nowhere more freely than in the circles of the Court, had left him no option but to resign. Nevertheless he was so far from being 'in a disposition to seek pardon for what was past, that, if on any future occasion he saw an attack made upon the rights of the parochial clergy, in which the Court thought fit to take a part, he would think himself obliged to concur with such of his brethren as appeared to be in the same sentiments with him, in warning his clergy and advising them to petition, that they might be heard before they were condemned'. Finally he expressed his cordial good wishes for the success of the Administration in all its efforts for the welfare of the nation, and his hope that they might 'be able to replace

[1] Lord Hervey, *Memoirs of the Reign of George II*, vol. ii, p. 93.
[2] 'Complaints on the part of the Bishop of London', Gibson MSS. iii. 63.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Gibson to Hare, 4 Aug. 1736, iii. 71.

the safety and security of the whole upon that firm foundation, the only foundation of peace and happiness to this country, the Protestant Succession, the Church Establishment, and the Toleration '.[1]

Thus Gibson parted from Walpole. He had served the interests of Church and State faithfully for twelve years, until he was driven from power by the anti-Church spirit. One last echo of the strife and contest was heard when the Archbishopric of Canterbury fell vacant in the following year by the death of Wake on the 24th January 1736/7. The aged primate, who had for many years ' been fallen into the animal life ', had at length died, and the most coveted prize of the Church was in the hands of the Ministry again. For many years it had been confidently believed that Bishop Gibson was certain to succeed to this dignity. He had been commonly called ' the heir apparent to the Archbishopric of Canterbury ',[2] for it seemed but just that he should enjoy the honours of an office, the duties of which he had discharged for so long. His enemies had represented him, in satire and ballad, as impatiently ambitious to secure this symbol of supremacy in the Church, in order to demonstrate the full force of his power. Under the figure of a sculling race across the Thames to Lambeth, or that of a triumphal procession to the city of Canterbury, they had depicted the goal of his efforts and anxiety.[3] When once he had established himself in archiepiscopal state, the defiant scribblers who ventured to pillory his manners should find him ready to treat them with due severity.

> Hence witlings think my haughty trade
> Fit subject for a pasquinade
> Which braves Church Militant banners
> By libelling a b[i]sh[o]p's manners.

[1] Gibson, ' My last letter to Walpole ', Gibson MSS. iii. 61.

[2] Whiston, *Memoirs*, p. 255.

[3] Cf. ' The Hierarchical Skimmington ', in which Gibson is represented going in majestic procession, ' To view a distant City which In little time he hopes to reach ' ; and ' First Oars to L(a)m(be)th ', where Gibson, Sherlock, and Blackburne are depicted rowing across to the Palace in eager contest. ' Pope E(dmu)nd to L(amb)eth rows in a wherry, For th' A(rch)B(isho)p's P(ala)ce of C(anterbur)y ', *B.M. Catalogue of Prints and Drawings*, iii. 2280, 2871.

But when my talent 's backed with power
I'll such a hierarchy restore
As shall enforce a quick transition
From Bridewell to an Inquisition.[1]

In addition to the charges of private ambition, and of zeal for magnifying Church power, which were brought against him by the pamphleteers, his enemies at Court were asserting strongly that personal jealousy had been the real motive which had governed his policy. They urged that until a few months before his fall it had been universally understood that he would accept translation to Canterbury when the Primate died. Suddenly, however, his attitude had completely changed. He had demanded of Walpole the right of 'naming his successor at London', and had insisted that upon no account should Sherlock be offered his see. When this request was firmly refused, he 'took the resolution of not going to Canterbury on these terms' and straightway went into opposition. The chief spokesmen of this opinion was Lord Hervey, who was fully persuaded that Gibson's ambition in seeking the archbishopric was to increase his own power, and that his recent opposition to the Government sprang from feelings of offended vanity.[2] Nor was he alone in his belief that the Bishop's disinclination to accept the primacy, in case the offer were made to him, was a very recent decision which he had sprung upon the Ministry quite unexpectedly. Sir Robert Walpole himself had regarded the matter as 'for many years resolved on in the fullest and most absolute manner without so much as a thought of anybody else', and only since Christmas 1735 had he entertained 'any apprehensions that Gibson would decline it'.[3] There

[1] 'Dr. Codex's Fifth Pastoral', London, 1734, T. Cooper, Bp. Gibson Pamphlets, xv. 16, Sion College Library.

[2] Lord Hervey, *Memoirs of the Reign of George II*, vol. ii, pp. 106–8; cf. Pyle to Kerrich, 31 July 1761: 'A Bishop of London is (as such) so often concerned with any Ministry and has so many opportunities of ingratiating himself with those at the helm, that if he is a man of address and parts, and understands business, he'll quickly make a cypher of an Archbishop of Canterbury. This Gibson did by Wake and he knew that Sherlock would have done the same by him and therefore ever (in Sir R. Walpole's and Queen Caroline's time) laboured against his promotion to that see in case of his own promotion to the primacy.' *Memoirs of a Royal Chaplain*, p. 349.

[3] Bp. Hare to Gibson, 7 Aug. 1736, Gibson MSS. iii. 72.

seemed, therefore, some justification for the view that the Bishop had been aiming at personal power and supremacy in the Church, and, finding this to be impossible, had withdrawn in chagrin from all concern in its public administration. This conclusion, however, will not bear a patient examination, for the evidence against it is impressive.

It is true that Gibson had regarded Sherlock as his most formidable rival and that he had exerted all his influence to prevent his advancement in the Church. It is probable too that Gibson had weighed the consideration that his situation at Lambeth would not be easy if Sherlock were his successor at London. But it is a matter of great doubt as to whether Gibson was influenced by motives of personal ambition, and whether the difficulties of his position during the past few years had not disposed him rather to retire from his office of ecclesiastical adviser to the Ministry than to increase his responsibilities by accepting the Primacy. From the outset of his intimacy with the Ministry he had been reluctant to accept the position which was pressed upon him. On the occasion of the contest for the Deanery of St. Paul's, he had protested solemnly to Walpole that London 'was the see he desired to live and die in and that he had no further aims of any kind in the Church. There was but one station that a Bishop of London could be supposed to have in his eye; and he declared with the greatest sincerity, that he wished above all things, that whenever that vacancy should happen (if it be while he were alive) it might happen at a time when he had not one grain of interest at Court'.[1] Also in 1730, and in 1734 when the sees of Durham and Winchester were offered to him, although his refusal was interpreted by everybody as a sign that he desired a higher station, he had written on both occasions with regard to the Primacy 'that as it was a station of great importance to the King's service, and it could not be foreseen what the state of public affairs might be when the vacancy happened . . . it would therefore be the wisdom of the Court to keep themselves wholly disengaged in that point and at full liberty to make choice of such a person as they thought well adapted to the state of

[1] Gibson to Walpole, n.d., Gibson MSS. iv. 13.

affairs at that time', and that 'if the circumstances should be such as to make him thought of among others, he doubted whether he would have the courage to undertake the charge'.[1] Nor could his subsequent actions be interpreted otherwise. Would it not have been politic on his part, if he had been ambitious above all things to secure the Archbishopric, to comply with all the whims of the Court until he had succeeded, and then to strike out a line of his own in opposition to them? Had his conduct in the affair of Dr. Rundle's nomination to Gloucester been that of a man who preferred private ambitions to public principles? Not only had he stood out against all the wishes of the Court and the Chancellor, but he had definitely offered to resign at the outset of the struggle, and had only been dissuaded by the Ministry.[2] In the case of the agitation of the Dissenters for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts also he had been in opposition to the prevailing sentiment in high places. Even in the very crisis of the Quakers' Bill 'the Court could not but think it a fair and honest part in him to let them see clearly before the Archbishopric became vacant, how far he might, or might not, be depended upon'.[3] A time-serving prelate would have been found at the feet of Lady Sundon, cringing for favours, and begging for her directions as to his line of conduct; that was the easiest avenue to preferment and the satisfaction of personal ambition. Furthermore, Gibson had always refused to give a definite promise that he would accept the Primacy. Whenever it had been mentioned in conversation between Walpole and himself 'his language had always been, that he must not take it for granted, and that he would do well to have in his mind a scheme for Lambeth on supposition that London should not be vacant'.[4] The Prime Minister himself had admitted this fact, that he could never bring his Pope to say 'that he would accept it, if it should be offered'.[5] On the contrary, it must be said in fairness to

[1] Gibson, 'A Copy of a paper which I put into the hands of Sir R. Walpole by way of memorandum of what I desired him to say to ye King, upon occasion of his having offered me by him the Bishopric of Winchester', Gibson MSS. iii. 59.
[2] Gibson to Walpole, n.d. (but before the death of Bp. Sydal), ibid. iii. 50.
[3] Gibson, 'The Case of the Bishop of London's Retiring from Publick Business', iii. 65.
[4] Gibson to Hare, 10 Aug. 1736, iii. 73.
[5] Gibson to Bp. of Worcester, 16 Feb. 1736/7, iii. 69.

Walpole that, since he had never been met with a definite refusal, he had interpreted this hesitancy to mean, that Gibson ' was not determined to accept, not that he was resolved not to accept '.[1] This element of uncertainty in the situation was inevitable. For the Bishop, although he was disinclined to become Archbishop, ' did not think it either prudent or decent to declare absolutely that he would not accept, until the vacancy happened and the offer was made.' [2] With the lapse of years, however, his reluctance to undertake the more burdensome office hardened into a fixed resolution. The weight of advancing years and infirmities, the heavy and exacting labours of his diocese and the Plantations, the continual friction with the chief personages at Court, the virulent abuse heaped upon him by the press, the increasing strength of the ' anti-Church ' spirit, above all, the desertion of the lay Whigs, for whose alliance he had paid so high a price, all these considerations demonstrated with convincing force that the prudent course would be to resign his official position and withdraw to the comparative ease and comfort of diocesan administration. Accordingly he had warned the Ministry, after the stormy sessions which had marked the end of the Parliament of 1727–33, that the reproach which his brethren were casting upon him, of not being able to defend the clergy against the attacks of their enemies ' had brought him upon very mature deliberation to conclude it inconsistent with his character to suffer this reproach to rest upon him any longer, and that in order to deliver himself from that and from the vexations attending it, it was necessary for him to quit all concern in the publick affairs of the Church '.[3] He had been induced to continue at his post a little longer, but had determined not to charge himself with the Archbishopric. Instead he was waiting until a convenient opportunity should occur when he might ' go out quietly, without offence and without ruffle ', and ' with a sense of the good will of the Court towards him '. It was evident that the death of the Archbishop, whenever it happened, would provide the most suitable occasion for such a retirement.

[1] Hare to Gibson, 12 Aug. 1736, iii. 74.
[2] Gibson to Hare, n.d., iii. 75.
[3] Gibson MSS. iv. 23.

Until the unfortunate episode of the Quakers' Bill, therefore, Gibson's resolution had been 'to bear the uneasiness and go on as he had done, upon a prospect of the Archbishop's death and the opportunity he would then have to get clear of it without offence and without breach'.[1] The misrepresentations and calumnies which were placed upon his conduct at this juncture prevented the realization of his peaceful purpose, and left him no option but immediate withdrawal. Accordingly he sent a farewell letter to Walpole informing him that, since, 'as long as the anti-Church spirit prevailed, vexations of the like kind were to be expected from session to session, the largest share of which had hitherto fallen upon him . . . he therefore chose to purchase his future peace and quiet, or at least an abatement of trouble and vexation, by having it understood that he had no more share in the publick affairs of the Church than the rest of his brethren.' From this letter it was indisputable that 'when he wrote it, he had no thoughts of an archbishopric'.[2]

So far from the truth, therefore, is it to say that Bishop Gibson had been for several years dominated by the passion to secure the Primacy in order to increase his power, and then had suddenly gone into vigorous opposition to the Government from personal pique, that the correct interpretation of the situation seems to be that, having at the outset undertaken the office of adviser to the Ministry from a sense of public duty and obligation, he had only been prevented from indulging sooner his personal desire for peace and retirement by their representations and by his own wish to be of full service to the Church. Nevertheless, the Ministry had now to solve the problem of the vacant Archbishopric, without possessing any clear idea of the qualifications of the various candidates for it. Bishop Sherlock had lost his chance by his opposition to the Quakers' Bill, after the defeat of which he had been advised by the Queen 'to go down to his diocese and live quietly'.[3] Walpole was inclined to favour his friend Hare, but Lord Hervey had a preference for Potter of Oxford, and, by continually soliciting the Queen

[1] Gibson to the Duke of Newcastle, 26 Sept. 1740, B.M. Add. MS. 32695, No. 150.

[2] Gibson, 'My last letter to Walpole', Gibson MSS. iii. 61.

[3] Lord Hervey, *Memoirs of the Reign of George II*, vol. ii, p. 104.

on his behalf, he succeeded at last in weaning her from her regard for Sherlock and winning her to the support of his favourite. On 28th February 1737, therefore, John Potter was appointed to the Primacy, in the hope that ' his capacity was not so good, nor his temper so bad ' as to make the Ministry repent of his being there.[1] His nomination set the seal to the withdrawal of the Bishop of London. During the long indisposition of Wake, Gibson had ' thought it incumbent upon him to have an eye to the general concerns of the Church and clergy and to put things in motion for the service and defence of both as occasion required '.[2] Now, however, he could relinquish this position and confine himself to the business of his diocese and the Plantations.

It must be acknowledged that Gibson had emerged from the unhappy episode of the Quakers' Bill with more credit and dignity than had Walpole. Whilst adhering tenaciously to his own policy, he had maintained a dignified silence under the provocations of misrepresentation and abuse. The Prime Minister, on the other hand, had been so incensed by the failure of his plans as to lend the weight of his authority to the propagation of libel and calumny. But though he had behaved ' with a spirit of acrimony very unusual to him ' ;[3] his colleague did not return slander for slander. Horace Walpole acknowledged that ' though Gibson had broke with his father, he always expressed himself most handsomely about him and without any resentment or ingratitude '.[4] Nevertheless the breach marked the failure of Gibson's political schemes. This failure was due to the unfortunate circumstance which had compelled him to ally with the Whig party and to strive to create the hybrid phenomenon of a High-Church Whig. It was impossible that the Whigs could adopt the programme which he had sketched out. They were the natural advocates and supporters of the Dissenters : he was a vehement defender of the privileges of the Church, and of the restrictive measures against Noncomformists. They were the champions of the freedom of the Press

[1] Ibid., pp. 108 seq.
[2] Gibson to Hare, 4 Aug. 1736, Gibson MSS. iii. 72.
[3] Coxe, *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Robert Walpole*, vol. i, p. 478.
[4] *Letters of Horace Walpole*, ed. Paget Toynbee, vol. ii, p. 341.

and their rule was characterized by its tolerance of the most virulent criticism: he was extremely jealous of the liberty enjoyed by the scribblers, and anxious to punish all excesses with exemplary severity. They were the representatives of the principle of the supremacy of the laity against the pretensions of the Church; he was the apostle of the divine right of the hierarchy and of the independence of the spiritual society. They were disposed by their belief in toleration to look lightly upon the offence of theological unorthodoxy: he was implacable in his hostility to all preachers of false doctrine. With such fundamental differences of outlook there can be little surprise that the experiment ended in failure. Bishop Gibson was designed by Providence to be a High-Church Tory 'sans peur et sans reproche'; the accident of the Revolution, and the taint of Jacobitism which clung to the Tories, drove him into political alliance with the Whigs, among whom he sojourned in lonely isolation, a citizen without a country, and a leader without a host.

VI

THE RELIGIOUS AND MORAL CONDITION OF THE NATION

'THE historian of moral and religious progress', wrote Mark Pattison of the first half of the eighteenth century, 'is under the necessity of depicting the period as one of decay of religion, licentiousness of morals, public corruption, profaneness of language—a day of rebuke and blasphemy.'[1] This harsh verdict is not only the judgement of a later and more refined century upon the manners of its ruder predecessor, but reflects the attitude of contemporaries themselves. From all sides rise up an impressive cloud of witnesses, testifying against the evil and adulterous generation to which they belonged. The complaint is not merely the despairing accusation of apostacy flung from the lips of the disillusioned Non-Juror; it is more than a protective bulwark set up by the Deists to cover their attack upon the citadel of revealed religion: it does not proceed only from individuals of superior piety, like William Law, nor from the quickened spiritual sense of the leaders of the Methodist revival. It is the concurrent testimony of men of all parties; of courtiers, whose private standards of conduct were not exacting, of statesmen, whose real concern was lest the constitution and industry of the lower classes should be destroyed by excess, and of divines who were preachers of common sense ethics and haters of rhetorical exaggeration, and who had made a comfortable compromise with many of the minor weaknesses of the world. Amongst all writers and speakers of the age there is a general consensus of opinion that it was characterized by a more than usual moral licence and contempt of external restraints. Its particular vices seem to have been 'a shameless immorality in sexual relations, drunkenness, profanity, and excessive gaming'.[2] All classes of the

[1] Mark Pattison in *Essays and Reviews*, p. 254.
[2] G. V. Portus, *Caritas Anglicana*, p. 29.

community were affected by the same moral degeneracy, though different classes specialized in different vices. The reasons for this condition of affairs are to be sought in the history of the two preceding centuries. The result of the Reformation had been that English religious life had become chaotic. The old system of medieval Catholicism had been destroyed, and no efficient successor had been found. The various and rapidly changing substitutes which had been tried, as authority after authority had gone by the board, had produced a sense of bewilderment and confusion. The total lack of any scheme of national education left the poorer classes at the mercy of every religious enthusiast and liable to be carried away by every blast of new doctrine. Consequently the break up of the old order had brought mainly negative results. Among the more educated classes, the enervating influence of scepticism was beginning to be felt. The philosophy of the rationalists was undermining the authority of revelation, and disbelief in the Christian theology was spreading rapidly. In addition to these inward movements of thought, the external events of the seventeenth century were producing their inevitable effects. The civil war and the upheaval of the Commonwealth on the one hand, and the prolonged Continental struggles which had succeeded the Revolution on the other, had bred up a generation with strong religious passions, but with little time for education. After Cromwell had come Charles II with his open immorality in private life, and his unblushing treachery in plotting to betray the civil and religious liberties of England to the absolutist King of France. The thin veneer of romantic sentiment which had veiled and enveloped the corrupt national and personal policy of the later Stuarts had been rudely torn aside by the Revolution. Henceforth the age of reason and of common sense displaced that of romance and chivalry, and the unhappy association of religion with the hating of Presbyterians and the extolling of non-resistance could not fail to react adversely upon the national character.

Unfortunately the moral standards of the upper classes did not improve with the change of dynasty. In this respect at least the Hanoverian monarchs were faithful to the example of

Charles II and gallantly led the fashion in maintaining mistresses. The prevailing theological opinions of the royal entourage were likewise sceptical, for the Queen was known to be an admirer of the deistical writings. More insidious and far reaching, however, in its effects, was the entire lack of a sense of social responsibility among the higher classes. 'The general failure of the age was the refusal of the majority of the upper classes to recognize any bond of social obligation. Religion had not a strong enough hold upon the nation at large to induce the aristocracy and the plutocracy (for trade interests were beginning to produce an English aristocracy of achievement) to adopt for their rule of life the motto "Noblesse oblige".'[1] It was this which stifled all attempts at Reformation of Manners.

The middle classes, generally, were much better than those either above or below them. Archbishop Wake expressed the opinions of most thoughtful observers when he wrote that 'iniquity in practice . . . abounds too much among us, chiefly in the two extremes, the highest and lowest ranks of men. The middle sort are serious and religious'.[2] They were the backbone of the nation, though they too shared in the universal degeneracy of the age. The stage was becoming so licentious that even Lord Hervey was constrained to admit that it called for 'some restraint and regulation'.[3] *The Beggar's Opera* was characteristic of the prevailing laxity of morals. Matthew Hutton, a future Primate, preached a sermon against it, and one of Gibson's correspondents complained to him that 'the popularity and applause of the Beggar's, or rather the Rogue's, Opera hath too much manifested the inclination of the town'.[4]

The condition of the lowest classes was deplorable indeed. Not only were they overwhelmed by the filth and squalor of their surroundings, but drunkenness with the attendant vices of lawlessness and immorality had increased to an almost incredible degree. The capital city at night was a place of great danger, murder and robbery being common crimes. The

[1] Portus, *Caritas Anglicana*, p. 97.
[2] Wake to Père Courayer, quoted in *Memoirs of Viscountess Sundon*, vol. i, p. 85.
[3] Lord Hervey, *Memoirs*, ii. 341.
[4] Dr. W. Harris to Bp. Gibson, Gibson MSS. iii. 19.

London mob was ' the most cursed brood in existence ', so that it was scarcely safe to travel or walk in the streets.[1] At the root of all this violence and misery was the crass ignorance of the poorest classes. They were entirely destitute of the elementary notions of religion, morality, and social obligation. The serious consequences of this state of affairs had been noticed by observers of such different characters as Bishop Burnet and Robert Nelson, whilst Bishop Ken of Bath and Wells also ' thought the only chance of improvement was in raising up a new generation who should be better taught '.[2] To grapple successfully with a problem of such magnitude would demand the united zeal and efforts of churchmen and politicians.

In this, as in other branches of his duty, Bishop Gibson was zealous and determined. As Bishop of the Metropolis he was brought into contact with the vices of the highest and lowest classes of society, and as Dean of the Chapels Royal he was in constant communication with the Court itself. The most difficult problems which beset him were connected with the royal entourage. The private immoralities of the King were notorious, and the evil effects of this example were apparent to all.

There could be no doubt that the attitude of the upper classes was the chief obstacle to reform. Not only were they among the most vicious portion of the community in general, but they were also looked upon as examples to their inferiors, so that no reformer could ignore them if his efforts were to be in any wise fruitful. A particular example of the looseness of morals at the Court was the immense popularity and influential patronage enjoyed by Masquerades. These spectacles were quite different from that form of entertainment known as The Masque which had been supported by James I and Charles I. In the latter case the performance consisted of ' a very few persons in masques, who were in the area of a spacious room for the entertainment of a numerous assembly

[1] Cf. H. Walpole, *Memoirs of the Reign of George II*, vol. i, p. 44; Abbey and Overton, *The English Church in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. ii, p. 45; E. H. Burton, *Life and Times of Bishop Challoner*, vol. i, p. 74.

[2] J. H. Overton, *Life in the English Church* (1660–1714), p. 72.

all sitting or standing regularly in their places and without masques'.[1] There was no similarity between 'Comus' and the masquerades patronized by George I. The Puritans, of course, had suppressed even this innocent diversion, but the Restoration had revived it with less reputable additions. Once again the severity of William III had discountenanced such forms of amusement, but towards the end of Queen Anne's reign the popularity of Masquerades had increased perceptibly, and the new elements which they had borrowed from France were neither elevating nor refining. Of the type of masquerade which enjoyed such a remarkable vogue under George I and his son, it can be confidently affirmed that its influence was degrading and corrupting. Drunkenness was the usual concomitant of the performances, which lasted until the early hours of the morning, before which time there had often been several quarrels and unseemly brawls.[2] Lewdness was encouraged by the circumstances which allowed people of both sexes to mingle promiscuously, concealed their identity under the protective screen of a mask, and furnished several retiring rooms into which they could withdraw 'to fall into any profane discourse or lascivious behaviour to which their inclinations should lead them'.[3] In the satire which Hogarth directed against Masquerades, there were depicted various figures indulging in loose gesture and act, whilst a pair of lecherometers were affixed to the walls, the one marking the various degrees of Expectation, Hope, Hot Desire, Extreme Hot, Moist, Sudden Cold, and the other, those of Cool, Warm, Dry, Changeable, Hot moist, and Fixt. By approaching these the guests could obtain indication of the rise or fall of their passions.[4]

When the report gained currency, in the early days of January 1723/4 that George I was contemplating the revival of this noxious diversion, Bishop Gibson determined to offer a vigorous resistance. Being called upon to preach the annual

[1] Gibson, 'Mischief of Masquerades', Gibson MSS. iv. 26.
[2] Portland MSS. vii. 460.
[3] Gibson, 'Mischief of Masquerades', Gibson MSS. iv. 26.
[4] Hogarth, 'The Masquerade Ticket', *B.M. Catalogue of Prints and Drawings*, Satires, iii. 1799.

sermon before the Societies for the Reformation of Manners on the 6th of that month, he took advantage of this opportunity 'to declare in a free and open manner the apprehension he had of the pernicious effects that masquerades naturally and unavoidably produce'.[1] He denounced them as chief among 'the various engines contrived by a corrupt generation' to undermine the public morals, 'being neither better nor worse than an opportunity to say or do there, what virtue, decency and good manners will not permit to be said or done in any other place.' Furthermore, he added the characteristic observation that patriotic as well as religious motives compelled Englishmen to discourage them, when they remembered that they 'were brought among us by the ambassador of a neighbouring nation in the last reign, whilst his master was in measures to enslave us; and indeed there is not a more effectual way to enslave a people, than first to dispirit and enfeeble them by licentiousness and effeminacy'.[2] The basis of Gibson's opposition was the conviction that the circumstances attendant on the performance of masquerades which gave both sexes 'the freedom of profane discourse, wanton behaviour, and lascivious practices without the least fear of being discovered', destroyed entirely that sense of shame in youth, which was 'the great guard to the virtue of mankind and the chief preservative against vice'. Therefore it was necessary to speak plainly to the circles of Court society concerning their duty and responsibility as leaders of the nation. Gibson was greatly troubled by the prospect of masquerades 'spreading and growing into a fashionable diversion, which was usually the case of such diversions as were favoured and countenanced by persons of figure and standing, by whom they were generally carried from thence into all parts of the kingdom'.[3]

It was natural that such straight speaking should not be relished by the persons to whom it was addressed. There were many complaints of the tiresome meddling of the clergy in

[1] Gibson, 'Letter to his Clergy on Masquerades', 5 Dec. 1724, Gibson MSS. iv. 27.

[2] Gibson, 'A Sermon preached before the Societies for the Reformation of Manners', 6 January 1723/4.

[3] Gibson, 'Mischief of Masquerades', Gibson MSS. iv. 26.

matters which did not concern them, and it was said that 'the last paragraph [of Gibson's sermon] about Masquerades ought to be publicly complained of by those concerned in the late Queen's affairs', or that 'the French minister ought to complain to the King of it'.[1] It was the Bishop of London, however, who presented the complaints to His Majesty, for in addition to his utterances in public sermons, he took counsel with several of his episcopal brethren, and a corporate petition was sent to Lords Townshend and Carteret for conveyance to the throne. Accordingly a proclamation was issued 'that there should be no more masquerades, but what were subscribed for at the beginning of the month, viz. only six'.[2] The bishops had actually gained their point and the spirited policy of Gibson seemed to be justified. Of course, the prohibition only extended to public masquerades, and at private entertainments they were still in great demand. Nevertheless, the King had been prevailed upon to discountenance them in his official capacity, although his resolution proved short-lived.

Before the end of the year the battle had to be re-fought and on this occasion the Church had to submit to the Court. At first Gibson refused to believe that His Majesty would go back upon his express prohibition, but when he found that the evil was increasing, he prepared to renew his protest and opposition. His case had been strengthened by the experience of private masquerades during the interval. 'It was said that private masquerades grew more numerous and were more diabolical than the public, bad as they were.'[3] Gibson asserted that in one case the company had been found 'upon a very exact and public enquiry, to be a concourse of both sexes, married as well as unmarried, and all of them in masks for the most lewd and profligate purposes'.[4] Sixteen bishops therefore met together, under the nominal presidency of the Archbishop of Canterbury, to consider what steps should be taken to prevent the realization of the menace. They decided that a resolute

[1] Portland MSS. vii. 372.
[2] Boyer, *Political State of Great Britain*, xxvii. 95.
[3] Portland MSS. vii. 393.
[4] Gibson, 'Letter to his clergy on Masquerades', Gibson MSS. iv. 27.

hostility must be shown, but being aware ' that the enemies of the Government would be ready to make such a meeting, if it were known, an occasion of reproach against the public Administration ', they were so considerate towards the Ministry, as not only to hold their sessions with all possible privacy and to preserve strict secrecy ' as to everything that passed there ', but to approach Lord Townshend also in a private manner and to request him to represent their case to the King.[1] In the letter which they sent to him, they reminded him that ' among the discontents which heretofore raised a civil war in the nation, no one thing did more to prejudice the people against the Government than the introducing public sports and diversions which were thought to entrench upon religion ', and they re-affirmed their conviction that the encouragement of masquerades would likewise ' work the most sober and serious part of the nation into a coldness towards His Majesty and his Administration ', of which there were not lacking signs already.[2]

Bishop Gibson was not content merely to join in the protest of his brethren, but felt that his peculiar position required further activity on his part. He therefore addressed a private letter to Townshend, which he justified on the grounds that ' this wicked scene happened to be in his diocese and the persons who were in danger to be corrupted by it were those whose religious concerns were more particularly committed to his care '. He repeated the pleadings which had been used in the joint letter, protested his sympathy with all innocent forms of diversion, and reiterated the warning that, as the chief reliance of the Government ' must be upon the sober and serious part of the nation ', so it was certain that this part would be greatly troubled and their zeal for the Administration abated if the favour of the Court were given to such wicked inventions.[3]

Despite all the efforts of the bishops, collectively and individually, the King could not be moved to re-issue his proclamation. It was evident that their protests would be ineffectual,

[1] ' A Joint Letter of the bishops to Lord Townshend on Masquerades ' (written in Gibson's hand), Gibson MSS. iv. 28.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Gibson to Townshend, ' On Masquerades ', n.d., iv. 29.

and it was even rumoured that one contributory cause was the desire of Archbishop Blackburne ' to banter it and quash it '.[1] In view of the failure of these private remonstrances, Gibson determined to declare his attitude publicly. He took steps to inform his clergy that he had not been inactive in the matter, and exhorted them in the most earnest manner to guard their people from ' so manifest and dangerous an infection ', especially by warning the youth of their parishes against the corrupting influence of such spectacles on public and private morality. Also he wrote again to Townshend, not to urge him to attempt what it was not in his power to accomplish, namely the conversion of the King to the petitioners' point of view, but to warn him that he would feel compelled to have regard to his own duties and responsibilities in the matter. If his opposition to the will of the Court should subject him to censure and obloquy, he did not wish to involve the Ministry in any trouble or difficulty on his behalf, but was content ' to rest on the inward satisfaction ot having done his duty, and as to all other matters, to sink or swim, as his lot should be '. He expected to be condemned ' as rash by some, by others as seditious, and by others again as enthusiastick ', but was prepared to endure all such reproaches with a perfect quietness of mind ' by the consciousness of having done no more than what, after very mature deliberation, and to the best of his understanding, he believed to be a duty belonging to his station '. The only accusation which would be intolerable would be that of disloyalty, and against this charge he relied upon the Ministry to defend him.'[2]

Neither private remonstrance nor public denunciation profited anything to correct the evil. The Court turned a deaf ear to all appeals, and masquerades continued to enjoy a remarkable vogue. The parliamentary session of January 1725/6 was opened with a masquerade which was said to be ' so infamous that even some of the great patrons of that diversion were scandalised at it ';[3] the fever rose to such a

[1] Portland MSS. vii. 393.
[2] Gibson to Townshend, ' On Masquerades ', Gibson MSS. iv. 30.
[3] Portland MSS. vii. 420, 460.

height that hosts and hostesses vied with each other in the production of gorgeous spectacles, each intended to exceed its predecessor 'in lewdness . . . as well as finery'. Even the earthquake of 1750 in London failed to produce any sobering effect, for on the day when the first shock occurred 'the masquerades were as full of company that night as ever'.[1]

The episode had demonstrated three things, however; the low moral standards of the Court, their insensibility to considerations of social responsibility, and the courage of the Bishop of London. There can be no doubt of the corrupting influence and associations of masquerades. Nor can the evil effect of the example set by the highest classes upon the lower be disputed. These circumstances, however, only set forward the courage shown by Bishop Gibson. By it he earned the just commendation of many besides Whiston for 'an action both very bold and very meritorious'.[2] He had risked the disfavour of the Court, and the loss of his position as adviser of the Ministry rather than keep silence upon a subject of morals, and his attitude was none the less laudable because these possibilities were not realized. There does not seem to be adequate evidence for the statement that the offer of the see of Winchester to him was a design of the King to remove him to a greater distance from the Court because of his inconvenient insistence upon moral principles.[3] Gibson himself regarded the offer, like that of Durham in 1730, as made to him 'out of respect', and the Queen herself 'was pleased to say that she hoped he would not accept' it, to which the King added the observation 'that there was another opportunity in view to show his regard to him', referring to the expected vacancy at Canterbury.[4] Also it is difficult to understand, if their Majesties were desirous of translating him to a more remote diocese because of his uncompromising attitude on the question of Masquerades, why they waited more than a decade (until

[1] Pyle, *Memoirs of a Royal Chaplain* (ed. Hartshorne), p. 164.

[2] Whiston, *Memoirs of his Life*, vol. i, p. 251.

[3] Article on 'Gibson' in *D.N.B.*; Overton and Relton, *A History of the English Church from the Accession of George I to the end of the Eighteenth Century*, p. 101.

[4] Gibson to Hare, 10 Aug. 1736, Gibson MSS. iii. 76; cf. Gibson's letter to Walpole declining the offer of Winchester, ibid., No. 59.

1734) to make this offer and why they did not discover some more expeditious means of banishing him from the Court. Nevertheless, although there was no official quarrel or severance of intimate relations between the sovereign and the bishop, it was evident that there could be no cordial friendship between them and that Gibson's protests and exhortations would not meet with a sympathetic response.

Having failed to persuade the upper classes to reform, he set to work, therefore, to enforce an improvement in the morals of the lower, in which connexion he came into close and protective alliance with the Societies for the Reformation of Manners. These Societies constitute a peculiar phenomenon in the history of English ecclesiastical organizations, and owe their distinctive character to the particular conditions which called them into existence. There was an abundance of legislation against irreligion, immorality, and profanity, but very little in the way of effective execution. The task of the Societies, therefore, was on the one hand, to stimulate the magistrates to enforce the laws, and on the other, to furnish informations of crimes committed. The reforming movement had its origin in a private agreement of the police officers and the dwellers in Tower Hamlets in 1690 to endeavour to suppress the open immorality of their suburb, and came rapidly into prominence in the following year when a regular association was formed. The new organizations absorbed a good deal of the enthusiasm and of the personnel of the older Religious Societies into their work, and secured an increasing number of convictions year by year. Unfortunately, during the Tory reaction of 1710–14, the Religious Societies, whose constitution had been exclusively Anglican, were driven back again into their former independence, and also became strongly tainted with the Jacobite sympathies of the Tory legitimists. By the withdrawal of their interest and assistance the Societies for the Reformation of Manners suffered a temporary setback and decline, until the accession of the Hanoverians and the establishment of the Whig supremacy restored their fortunes. From 1715 to 1725 there is evidence of a revival of interest in their work, and of a considerable measure of success attendant upon it.

Proclamations against irreligion and vice were published and the magistrates were more conscientious in enforcing them. From 1718 to 1725 the annual reports of the Society recorded an average number of 2,280 prosecutions for specific offences each year.[1]

Much of the success achieved depended upon the extent of the support and patronage of influential persons. The reforming bodies were greatly weakened by their failure to capture even a strong minority of the upper classes, and consequently they were very glad to secure the countenance and approbation of the prelates of the Church. Bishop Gibson was their convinced and cordial supporter. He agreed to preach the annual sermon at their meeting in 1723/4, and delivered an encouraging and unequivocal discourse in commendation of their aims and methods. Starting from the premiss that it was the duty of every individual Christian to do his utmost to combat the wickedness of the world, he proceeded to apply this principle to various classes of society. All persons occupying positions of authority were entrusted with the duty of promoting the love of virtue and rooting out the corrupt inclinations to vice in their dependents. In particular, Magistrates, as the guardians of the public morals, had received a special commission 'to oppose and discountenance wickedness' by a strict and impartial execution of the laws against it. Since, however, they could not be ubiquitous, themselves observing every offence committed and punishing all crimes from their own discovery, it must follow that 'they could not be so serviceable in the suppression of vice as they otherwise might, unless assisted by private intimations from others'. This involved the whole question of the propriety of the system of private informations, upon which the reforming societies based their activities and which was the cause of their increasing unpopularity. They had to discover some means of convicting persons who violated the laws, but who were unobserved by police officers. Hence, they decided to become informers themselves and supply the evidence necessary for the sentence of the malefactors. This practice was evidently open to severe

[1] Portus, G. V., *Caritas Anglicana*, p. 178.

attack, and was the real cause of their unpopularity, but it was the only practical method in the existing circumstances. Bishop Gibson, at any rate, could defend it stoutly and without any qualms of conscience. He told his hearers that 'as it was the duty of a good subject to an earthly prince to give information of all treasons against him, . . . so it was no less the duty of the subjects and servants of the great God . . . to inform His vicegerents, and all who were in authority under them, of all such abominable practices, which were properly treasons against the Majesty of Heaven'. Similarly he argued that associations of individuals for this purpose were expedient and commendable. For 'when wicked men openly associated against the cause of God, it would be strange in a Christian country, if good men should be censured for associating for it, especially when they intended no more than to make themselves subservient to legal authority, that is, no more than to give the laws against prophaneness and immorality the effect which the legislature intended them to have'.[1] Therefore, he welcomed their efforts in all great cities, but especially in the capital city of the kingdom and the centre of his own diocese, 'where great wealth and luxury sowed the seeds of lust and debauchery, and much idleness was a daily temptation and opportunity to carry them into practice; whither numbers of men and women flocked from all parts to support themselves by gaming and lewdness, and, having no other methods of subsistence, were doubly diligent in the corrupting of youth.'

Gibson's support was not confined to the delivery of hortatory discourses, but he also did his utmost to help the Societies in their practical work. He defended their motives and methods to the Ministry, as being the 'detecting disorders and immoralities of all kinds in order to be punished as the Laws direct' and gave his own testimony that 'he verily believed that they had no view but the doing good, which they did in that way with great trouble as well as hazard to themselves'.[2] Furthermore he employed his influence with the Administration to

[1] Gibson, 'A Sermon preached to the Societies for the Reformation of Manners, 6th January 1723/4.

[2] Gibson to A. Stone, 1 Feb. 1725/6, S. P. Dom. Geo. I, B. 61.

secure the publication of Orders for the strict execution of the laws against various offences, in order to help forward the work of the informers. One of the most difficult problems with which the Societies had to deal was that of the brothels in London. The shamelessness of the London prostitutes was notorious and led to the assertion of a careful observer that the capital in this respect was worse than ' any city in the world '.[1] Accordingly, Gibson prevailed upon the Government in May 1726 to issue a fresh Order for the trial of persons accused of sodomitical and other kindred offences, by which the Justices were directed to receive informations and strictly to punish all offenders of this sort.[2] By his efforts also this same Order was extended ' to houses which entertained Sodomitical Clubs ', in consequence of which information was speedily given of such a house kept by one Burley Jones in Drury Lane.[3] Indeed, Gibson was inclined to think that, strengthened by the new Orders, they were ' in a fair way to suppress that abomination once for all '. In like manner he drew the attention of the ministry to advertisements of races for wagers, which were being held on Sundays, and demanded that steps should be taken ' to prevent such a shameful and open profanation of the Lord's Day ', in consequence of which an Order was issued to the Justices of Westminster and Middlesex, to put into strict execution the statute of 1 Car. II ' for punishing divers abuses on the Lord's Day called Sunday ', with the additional inducement that those who distinguished themselves by their zeal in this matter ' would thereby more particularly recommend themselves to His (Majesty's) Royal Favour '.[4]

Despite their own enthusiasm and the support of the Bishop of London the Societies attained only a partial success, and by the end of another decade had practically ceased to exist. During the period 1725–38, instead of an average of 2,280 annual prosecutions which were made in the decade before

[1] *A Journey through England in Familiar Letters* (by John Macky), London, 1724, vol. i, p. 280.

[2] Gibson to C. Delafaye (for the Duke of Newcastle), 24 May 1726, S. P. Dom. Geo. I, B. 62.

[3] Gibson to Duke of Newcastle, ibid., B. 62.

[4] Gibson to C. Delafaye, 10 April 1728, ibid., B. 6 (together with the Order to the Justices).

1725, the number sank to an average of 753 prosecutions each year.[1] Consequently they did not succeed in dealing effectively with the problem of brothels, nor in putting a stop to breaches of the Sabbath. The reasons for their decline were threefold. They had roused the State to a realization of its duty in the matter of executing, as well as framing, the laws, and therefore, as the State, in the persons of its metropolitan justices, began to assume this responsibility, the efforts of the private reformers were gradually rendered unnecessary.[2] Also the methods of informers were becoming increasingly odious to the nation, yet the practice of informing was the basis upon which the activities of the Societies were founded. Particularly after the passing of the Gin Act of 1736 did the informers fall into general contempt. For the determination to evade its provisions was so widespread that it fostered the growth of a class of professional informers, who brought the more reputable members of the reforming bodies into like discredit. Finally, one of the earliest efforts of the Societies for the eradication of vice had been the publication of educative literature, but this important function had now been controlled almost to monopoly by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, which thus became the chief and more permanent influence in stemming the tide of irreligion and immorality. It is to the methods and aims of this Society that attention must now be turned.

Reference has already been made to the entire lack of a system of popular education as the chief cause of the prevalent disregard for religion and morals. This ignorance was a national failing, belonging in some degree to all classes of the community. Bishop Burnet thought that the English gentry 'were for the most part the worst instructed and the least knowing of any of their rank that he ever went amongst',[3]

[1] Portus, *Caritas Anglicana*, p. 183.

[2] There is evidence of marked improvement in the condition of London after 1750. 'Crimes of violence were fewer and different in kind, and there had been a great reduction in the number of prisoners for debt. The traditional violence and brutality of the London populace was gradually diminishing. At the end of the century it is no longer a subject of comment by foreign visitors.' M. D. George, *London Life in the Eighteenth Century*, p. 3, London, 1925.

[3] Burnet, *History of His Own Time*, ii. 648.

whilst 'the commonalty of the nation . . . were . . . ignorant . . . in the matters of religion'.[1] Accordingly one of the prime objects of the S.P.C.K. at its foundation in 1698 was the 'erecting catechetical schools in every parish in and about London', from which design had sprung the establishment of Charity Schools. Such efforts were not entirely a pioneer work, for there were a few isolated instances of the setting up of schools before the new society was founded. But the whole credit of turning a very exceptional into a common case belongs to the S.P.C.K. By the year 1704 there were fifty-four schools in and about London, which number had risen to 117 in 1712, whilst at the close of the latter year also there were 500 such schools in different parts of the country.[2] The concentration of effort upon the attempt to eradicate vice by educational methods is one of the evidences of the statesman-like vision of the founders of the S.P.C.K., and the chief cause of the perennial vigour of that Society. In the Charity Schools thus founded, the poorest and most abandoned children were trained to earn an honest living as apprentices and servants, and were taught the elementary principles of religion and morality. By this ministration of Christian education it was hoped 'to retrieve those miserable creatures from a trade of begging, pilfering, lewdness and the innumerable mischiefs both to themselves and the public which inevitably result from an idle and ill-nurtured poor'.[3]

At the outset the Dissenters had been generous subscribers to the Society, though the religious instruction had been upon Church lines, but during the Tory reaction of the last years of Anne, other and less comprehensive influences had been brought to bear upon the schools. As the Religious Societies had begun at that period to withdraw themselves from their association with Dissenters in the work of the Societies for the Reformation of Manners, so they had gradually drawn the management of the Charity Schools into their own hands, and

[1] Burnet, *History of His Own Time*, vol. ii, p. 647.
[2] J. H. Overton, *Life in the English Church, 1600–1714*, Chap. V, p. 227.
[3] 'A Memorial representing the original and design of Charity Schools', &c., Wake MSS. CCXLVIII, vol. xv, 'Universities, Charities, Religious Societies, 1715–18'.

had identified them with the High-Church policy of exclusiveness in the Church and legitimism in the State. By this unhappy association, the educational movement had fallen under suspicion of being inspired and organized for Jacobite purposes. There could be no doubt that during the years of uncertainty which preceded the death of Anne, a body of disaffected persons 'had endeavoured to get the management of the Charity Schools into their hands and to make them instrumental in nourishing and spreading an aversion to the Protestant Succession'.[1] Accordingly, after the establishment of the Hanoverian dynasty, the S.P.C.K. had been compelled to take vigorous measures to stamp out signs of disaffection. On the 30th August 1716 they decided 'to insert in the prayers for the use of the Charity Schools, some words praying for the King and the Royal Family', and to adopt it as a standing rule 'that no person be admitted as a Residing or Corresponding Member, unless the Society were satisfied of his having taken the oaths and that he was well-affected to His Majesty King George and his government'. At their meeting on September 6th it was agreed 'that whenever any application was made to the Society to bestow books or other benefactions to a Charity School in the country, care should be taken that the Society be well satisfied that the Masters and Mistresses of such School were well affected to His Majesty and his government'. Later it was found expedient to issue further instructions that all masters should be 'persons of known affection' to the present administration, and that in teaching the children great care should be taken not to impregnate their minds 'with any new and singular notions either in religion or government'.[2] From these regulations it is evident that the Charity Schools had incurred the hostility of many people, and that great vigilance must be exercised on the part of the managers if they were to escape censure and continue to flourish.

Among contemporary Churchmen, whether clerical or lay, there was no one more interested in, and zealous for, the welfare of these schools than Bishop Gibson. He had been a member of the S.P.C.K. from its earliest days, and had always been

[1] Ibid., Charity Schools. [2] Ibid.

keenly interested in its educational schemes.[1] He entertained an unusually high opinion of the good work and useful results of the Charity Schools, which he described on one occasion as 'raised by Providence to be a balance to the profaneness and infidelity of this age and a provision for a spirit of religion and piety in the next generation'.[2] Consequently he was very concerned that they should vindicate themselves from the suspicions of disloyalty which they had incurred in the years preceding the accession of George I. In 1716 he accepted the invitation to preach the sermon at the anniversary meeting of the children educated in the London schools, and delivered an address on the excellence of their work and the dangers and pitfalls which surrounded them. He commended the object of their foundation as the noblest of all the designs of charity, inasmuch as 'every mite that was cast in for the maintenance and continuance of such schools had in it this distinguishing value that it was so much contributed to the saving of souls'; and he confessed that there could be no greater incentive to generosity than the evidence 'of the excellent effect which charities in that way did every year produce'. But if the work was to command any degree of public confidence, the scheme of education must be so carefully ordered that it did not tend to serve the interests of the party of disaffection in the State and of Non-Juring sympathies in the Church. Therefore he laid down the fundamental principle that the children must not be taught any 'new and singular notions either in religion or government'. In the former sphere, only the essential doctrines of Christianity should be dealt with, and no attempt made to introduce into the minds of the infants the disputed points of divinity such as 'whether the Lord's Supper be a real Sacrifice, or only the commemoration of a Sacrifice', or 'whether the absolution of the priest be authoritative or declaratory only'. It is evident against whom these cautions were directed. In like manner, the scholars should be taught the duties of patriotism and submission to authority; but it

[1] Gibson became a member in 1700. Allen and McClure, *Two Hundred Years: The History of the S.P.C.K. (1698–1898)*, London, 1898, p. 21.

[2] Gibson, 'Charge to the Clergy of his Diocese', 1730/1.

was sufficient that they should know 'not to speak evil of princes, but to reverence authority and pay all duty, honour and obedience to the powers that are', without embarking upon 'speculative points concerning the constitutions of kingdoms and the rights of princes', which subjects were generally expounded 'with a design to breed disturbances in the State'.[1] As a result of the influence of Wake and Gibson in the councils of the S.P.C.K. a series of new rules was issued to exclude all disaffected persons from the management of the schools and the movement was saved from the perils of association with false brethren.

About the time of Gibson's translation to London, the trial and banishment of Atterbury gave an occasion for the renewal of the attacks upon Charity Schools, and since Gibson's new station brought him into close relations with the very centre of this educational enterprise, he determined to give the matter his speedy attention. The appearance in 1723 of a second edition of Mandeville's *The Fable of the Bees, with an Essay on Charity and Charity Schools* revived public interest in the question, and re-opened the controversy concerning the value of the schools. The assault was being delivered from two sides; on the one was the old objection that the schools were propagating disloyal principles in political life, and on the other it was urged that they were producing not a sober industrious body of workmen, but an idle, self-opinionated class of youths and girls, who affected to believe themselves superior to manual labour. A typical expression of these opinions was contained in *The British Journal* for Saturday, the 15th June 1723, in which it was urged that the practical results of this system were 'to take the lowest dregs of the people from the plough and labour to make them tradesmen, and by consequence to drive the children of tradesmen to the plough, to beg, to rob or to starve'. The writer denounced the children of these schools as 'a sort of idle and rioting vermin', who 'fancied themselves to be another rank of man-

[1] Gibson, 'The Peculiar Excellence and Reward of Supporting Schools of Charity. A Sermon preached at the anniversary Meeting of the children educated in the Charity Schools of London and Westminster', 24th May 1716.

kind, thought they were to be maintained in idleness and out of the substance of others for their fancied accomplishments, were above day-labour and by an idle education acquired a listlessness to it'. Therefore it was essential that such a system of education should be discountenanced by the State, since it could not be for the national profit to put 'chimeras and airy notions into the heads of those who ought to have pickaxes in their hands, and to teach people to read and write and cast account, who, if they were employed as they ought to be, could have no occasion to make use of them'. 'What benefit can accrue to the public' it was asked 'by taking the dregs of the people out of the kennels and throwing their betters into them'. Then there followed the usual charge of Jacobitism; that the promoters were 'staunch Jacobites, or in other words, furious High Churchmen', and the masters 'generally enemies to the establishment', who by their teaching 'engaged the parents and friends of the children in the interest of a Popish Pretender and bred up the children themselves to fight his battles in due times'.[1]

In face of such hostility, Bishop Gibson determined to inquire into the condition of the Charity Schools in London and to make it a part of his episcopal duties to see that they gave no just ground for complaint. Since this was a matter of national concern he took counsel with Lord Townshend before embarking upon any definite line of action. On the 15th September 1724 he wrote to him that 'he had thought for some time that it would become him as Bishop of London, to take some notice of the Charity Schools in the city and diocese, and the masters and mistresses of them, that they might at least be sensible that they were under inspection and

[1] *The British Journal*, Saturday, 15th June 1723; cf. 'A Letter to Gibson from Rev. Alan Jephson, Rector of Ramsden Bellhouse (Essex)', 11th Sept. 1723, who complained that the Charity Schools were used to teach 'the doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance skrewed up to an unreasonable, undue height', which was 'laying a foundation for setting up Popery and destroying the Church', so that some schools were notoriously 'nurseries of sedition and treason. And 'twere better for the poor lads to want learning than by the perverseness of their education to be thrown into the danger of blabbing out treason in every company'. Gibson MSS. i. 23; cf. Boyer, *Political State*, vol. xlvii, p. 554.

be more cautious in giving offence to the Government'. Therefore he had intended 'to summon all the masters and mistresses within the Bills of Mortality which were in his diocese, to the Chapter House of St. Paul's' and there to deliver to them a well-considered charge, which he would afterwards print and distribute to every master and mistress of a Charity School in the diocese. But since 'such a design ought to be well weighed and the proper method of carrying it into execution well considered' he submitted both the proposal and a copy of the charge which he had prepared to Lord Townshend 'to think of both of them at leisure and to favour him with his opinion of the whole design'.[1] On the 19th therefore Townshend replied that 'he had cast his eye over the paper about the Charity Schools and liked his lordship's thoughts very much, as he always found that his proposals tended extremely to the good of the Church and the service of His Majesty's Government'.[2]

Supported by this letter of approval Gibson proceeded to carry out his plans. He summoned the masters and mistresses to meet him on November 14th and delivered to them the discourse which he had sent to the Minister. In it he observed that the spread of Charity Schools into all parts of the kingdom had made them henceforth a national concern, so that 'it behoved them to take great care that, while they were promoting the ends of religion, they gave no jealousy of any kind to the civil government'. More especially was this necessary in London where they were immediately under the eye of the Government, and as he had heard several complaints 'of inconveniencies and abuses in the Charity Schools of the city', he had called together the present assembly 'first to acquaint them with such objections as seemed to him to have the greatest weight, and then to lay before them such rules for their future conduct as might remove the objections'. First among these was the charge levelled against the schools that their education set the children 'above the lower and more laborious stations of life'. If this merely meant that the boys

[1] Gibson to Townshend, 16 Sept. 1724, Gibson MSS. iv 15.
[2] Townshend to Gibson, 19 Sept. 1724, ibid. 10.

and girls were superior to the ordinary type of servant and workman, being 'sober and regular in their lives' and not given to swearing and cursing, and that they therefore demand more respectful and courteous treatment from their masters, then this condition was neither reprehensible, nor undesirable. On the contrary, their employers should be glad that they were now securing a better type of servant and should not be unwilling to treat them more considerately. Nevertheless, since the schools did not pretend to anything more 'than to prepare children to be good Christians and good servants', the education should not include fine writing for the boys, fine working for the girls, or fine singing for both, because these tended 'to grow by degrees into a more polite sort of education'. Gibson's master, Archbishop Tenison, had particularly enumerated the sorts of work to be done in the school which he had founded when Rector of St. Martin's in the Fields, 'to spin, to knit, to sew and to mark'. Therefore the children should not be allowed to exercise themselves in any of the finer arts, nor to sing uncommon tunes and anthems, but they should be taught 'that whatever attainments they got there were all the effects of charity', so that they should 'be thankful to God and grateful to their benefactors'. The good Bishop next passed to 'a very heavy objection indeed, and a point that the Government was nearly concerned to look after', namely the complaint 'that in many of the schools the children were trained up to disaffection'. If this tendency were not speedily corrected the future of the enterprise would be dismal indeed, for on the one hand the Administration 'would not long tolerate places of education concerning which they had not the most full and clear satisfaction upon this head', and on the other, persons who were supporters of the present establishment would not send contributions to help to maintain them. Drastic remedies must be employed to remove all suspicions of their being disaffected. It could not be denied that these charges were strictly true of the conditions of the schools a few years ago, and though 'there was good reason to believe that much of that leaven was now worked out', nevertheless five measures ought to be adopted straightway

to cultivate an active spirit of loyalty. First in the daily prayers both morning and evening, the King and the Royal Family should be prayed for by name; then respectful behaviour towards His Majesty, whenever his name was mentioned in speech, or poem, should be encouraged, and offenders punished with exemplary severity in a public manner; thirdly, pains should be taken to inculcate into the children 'the duties enjoined by St. Paul of "studying to be quiet and to do their own business and to work with their own hands", and to make them sensible of the sinfulness of disturbing governments, and of the folly as well as sinfulness of meddling with matters which did not belong to them, and especially matters which were so far above them'; also the spirit of loyalty and affection to the Crown and the Ministry would be fostered by careful instruction of the children and 'by possessing their minds with just and favourable impressions, of the King, his family and his administration', whilst their sense of their present happiness and liberty would be increased by a better understanding 'of the terrors of a Popish reign and of the persecutions which Protestants were to expect under a Popish Prince'. In conclusion Gibson warned his hearers that he intended to exercise a watchful supervision over the schools of his diocese and to make his words effective by appropriate actions. It was his purpose 'to make enquiry from time to time into the conduct and behaviour of the several masters and mistresses, so that if he should find any who neglected or avoided the giving such easy proofs of their loyalty . . . he must conclude them to be persons disaffected and very unfit to be entrusted with the education of children in a Protestant country'.[1]

According to the Bishop's intention the discourse thus delivered was printed for dispersion within his diocese. Through the influence and approbation of the S.P.C.K., however, it secured a much wider circulation. The Society deemed it of

[1] Gibson, 'Directions given by Edmund, Lord Bishop of London, to the Masters and Mistresses of the Charity Schools within the Bills of Mortality and Diocese of London, assembled for that purpose in the Chapter House of St. Paul's', 14th Nov. 1724. A manuscript copy of this address (presumably the copy submitted to Townshend) is to be found in S. P. Dom. Geo. II, B. 109 (undated).

such importance that they obtained his leave to present a copy of it to all their members, and to send one likewise to all schools throughout the kingdom with a particular recommendation that care be taken 'in pursuance of his lordship's directions' both in the ordering of the curriculum and in the cultivation of a proper spirit of loyalty.[1] In the course of his address, also, Gibson had touched upon the question of singing, and had urged that the exercises of the children in this respect might well be confined to the psalms of David, instead of comprehending 'compositions merely human'. For it was generally complained that the boys and girls had picked up snatches of 'a great number of profane and lewd ballads', which tended to corrupt their morals, so that Gibson published a selection of psalms 'proper to be sung by Charity children in the Church' in order to counteract this evil influence.[2]

That Gibson had not directed his attention to an unworthy object may be realized by a consideration of the extent to which the educational movement had spread throughout the kingdom. In 1723, there were 134 Charity Schools in London, 1,258 in the rest of the kingdom, and 152 in Ireland, in which no fewer than 25,266 boys and 6,566 girls received elementary instruction. The numbers continued to increase steadily, and in 1725 the figures were: 133 schools in the capital; 1,223 in 'South Britain', 65 in North Britain, 161 in Ireland, with a grand total of 26,010 boys and 6,800 girls in attendance.[3] These statistics constitute a noble testimony to the activities of the S.P.C.K. An enthusiastic panegyrist celebrated the excellence of their labours with fulsome praise, as he considered,

> What num'rous trains of unbred youth
> Unbroke from vices and untrain'd to Truth,
> Are wisely rescued from those dang'rous ills
> Whose lewd effects our Sessions Paper fills,
> In these, they are with wholsom doctrins fed
> To honest arts and useful knowledge bred.

[1] Printed letter of S.P.C.K., 28th August 1725, Bp. Gibson Pamphlets, xiii. 14, Sion College.

[2] Gibson, 'A Course of Singing Psalms', Bp. Gibson Pamphlets, xviii. 15, Sion College.

[3] 'Annual Reports of the Charity Schools, 1723 and 1725', ibid., Sion College, 43, F. 15, No. 6; 43, F. 20, No. 13.

Nor were the good effects confined to the minds and souls of the beneficiaries

> Its blest effects their bodies also share
> What numbers now our wealthy streets adorn
> In decent habits, not in rags forlorn.

So that this beneficent charity was producing yearly a body of children, whose fate would be otherwise most miserable, but who were now

> Well fed, well taught, array'd in godly zeal
> To serve our Holy Church and Common Weal.[1]

It is necessary to make some allowance for the imaginative idealism of the poetaster, but, nevertheless, beneath his eulogy lay a solid basis of fact, upon which the Society can found a just claim to the gratitude of posterity.

Meanwhile the movement was being pushed forward outside the schools by the dissemination of a continuous volume of tracts directed against the prevalent vices of the age. This had been the distinguishing characteristic of the Society from its inception. It had never been militant in the same manner as the Reforming Societies, but had adopted the wiser though more patient policy of correcting the national point of view. Therefore it had published a considerable quantity of hortatory literature to be sent into all parts of the country. To ensure the success of this system, it was essential that the clergy should be interested in it, and the Society endeavoured to secure the assistance of the leading clergy of every county, by inviting them to become Corresponding Members, and to undertake to purchase its pamphlets at a reduced figure in order to distribute them among the neighbouring laity as well as clergy. Bishop Gibson lent a willing hand in this respect so far as his own clergy were concerned. He decided that the market towns were the natural strategic centres from which the local campaigns should be directed. Accordingly he wrote personally to the chief clergyman in every market town, to

[1] 'Charity in Perfection, this side Heaven; or the Great Happiness and Advantage of Erecting Charity Schools: A Poem by J. B., Under Master of the Charity School in St. Alban's, Holborn', London, 1716, Sion College, 45, A. 6, No. 4.

commend to him the appeal of the S.P.C.K., adding to it his private request that 'as the ministers of market towns were best qualified to give it the desired effects, both by a more frequent intercourse with their neighbouring clergy and by more easy conveyances to and from such towns, he would be glad, if he (the receiver) would take upon himself the trouble of being a Corresponding Member'.[1] In addition he sent a printed letter to all the incumbents of his diocese, drawing their attention to the value of the Society's tracts, which, being short, were such as men would be 'like to read, and being plain, they could not fail of understanding'. After giving a brief sketch of the work of the S.P.C.K., he commended its aims and methods to their consideration and expressed the hope that 'persons who were of ability, both among the clergy and laity would be disposed to become Subscribing Members or Occasional Contributors'.[2] More than a generation later, in 1779, the Society reprinted three thousand copies of this letter for distribution among its members.

The nature of the tracts which were published may be understood by reference to those contributed by Bishop Gibson himself, who wrote some brief and plain exhortations, on 'An Admonition against Profane and Common Swearing', 'The Sinfulness of Neglecting and Profaning the Lord's Day', and 'An Earnest Dissuasive from Intemperance in meats and drinks'. These pamphlets were monitory and minatory. Appeals to the practical common sense of men, arguments that virtue is the best policy prudentially, in the typical eighteenth century style, kept company with the most emphatic and lurid predictions of dire punishments in the world to come. Swearing was to be despised because it was a language 'which none used but the wild, unthinking profligate part of mankind', so that 'the bare word of a sober serious man had more weight than a thousand oaths of the common swearer', and also

[1] Gibson to P. Morant, Correspondence of Dr. Philip Morant, B.M. Add. MSS. 37221, 63.

[2] 'A Letter of Dr. Edmund Gibson, late Bishop of London, to the clergy of his diocese', dated Whitehall, 3rd April 1740 (republished by the S.P.C.K. with a catalogue of the books dispersed by them, and an abstract from their Standing Rules and Orders, 1779).

because he who accustomed his tongue ' to oaths and curses, was daily preparing it for the language of Hell '. In like manner ' it was a common observation . . . that publick criminals when they came to their unhappy end . . . frequently charged the sinful courses in which they had lived to their neglect and abuse of the Lord's Day as the first occasion of leading them into all other sorts of wickedness ', and in addition to the ruin of their temporal fortunes, they had to face the eternal punishment of their wrongdoing. So the victims of over-indulgence in meats and drinks were exhorted to remember that ' where an inordinate appetite reigns, reason and consideration are shut out ', and that their course of life was ' nothing better than nourishing themselves for the day of destruction and laying up fuel for the flames of Hell ' ; and if this dread prospect could not affright, an appendix to the tract contained a list of ten public representations concerning the evils of drinking, from physicians, Grand Juries, and Justices of the Peace, in which the destructive effects of excess upon the physical constitution were graphically described. On the other hand the pamphlets contained much positive religious teaching. A persuasive picture was drawn of the attractiveness of an honest and sober conversation, a homily given on the rationale of public worship, and an earnest exhortation to temperate living as an individual and social duty written, in each of the three respectively.

Thus by rebuking the profligacy of the Court and censuring the example given to the people, by defending the Societies for the Reformation of Manners in their efforts to suppress vice by measures of coercion, and by supporting the attempt of the S.P.C.K. to create an enlightened moral conscience in the community, Bishop Gibson did his utmost to combat the pernicious influences at work in the nation and to preserve both individuals and Society from the dangers of moral degeneracy and dissolution with which they were threatened.

VII

THE CHURCH

THE activities of the Reforming Societies and of the S.P.C.K. being directed against the irreligion and immorality of the nation, did not touch the problem of the abuses and irregularities in the Church; yet the general picture which is given of the condition of the spiritual body in the eighteenth century almost suggests that the clergy were more indifferent than the laity. It is therefore necessary to attempt to estimate the real state of affairs within the Church, and to judge if there is any demonstrable connexion between its lethargy and the profanity of the people. That the clergy as an order were very generally disliked and despised is undeniable. It would be necessary to go back several centuries to discover a period when they were the victims of so much satire and ridicule. 'The contempt was for the persons, manners and characters of the ecclesiastics.' From high to low, every wit had his fling at them. Bishop Gibson had frequent occasion to complain of the insults and jests against them which were encouraged in the circles of the Court. Even the Ministers of State were not void of offence in this respect. Bishop Wilcocks had to rebuke the Duke of Newcastle, than whom nobody had more reason to know the value of the support of the Bench, for his having 'dealt so freely with the whole bench of bishops before company', and to caution him against supposing 'that they would bear with like patience the abuses and insults of their friends as they had done, to their honour, those from the opposers of the Administration'.[1] Among the ranks of the scribblers, no condemnation was too harsh for the sacerdotal brood.

> First, as a rule I'll lay it down
> That in this giddy, busy town
> The c[lerg]y least religion have
> Of all the folks this side the grave.

[1] Bp. Wilcocks to the Duke of Newcastle, 21 Nov. 1735, S. P. Dom. Geo. II, B. 37.

Fulham, Jun. 19.
1736.

Dear Child,

The dog which Simon brings home has given such disturbance here in the night time as makes it necessary for us to send him away, and to desire that he may not come hither any more; so that it will be in your choice, either to keep him there in your stable, or to give him away. I hope, this will find you perfectly recovered; and with respects to Mrs Harris and Mrs Gibson, I remain,

Your affectionate Father

Edm: London.

Facsimile of a Letter from Bishop Gibson to his son, Thomas, aged 26
Endorsed 'Father's Letter ab' a Dog'

From the original in the possession of General J. C. Dalton, R.A.

UNIV. OF MICH.

For now the black-coat-greedy-dons
Are almost like old Eli's sons
Keep up the p[riesthoo]d for a cloak
Though most believe it all a joke.[1]

It was customary in gallant company, if the conversation happened to turn upon the pretensions of the hierarchy to hear a knight, or a member of parliament, work himself into a fury of indignation and denounce 'the Church of England only as a human legal establishment and the clergy as a Society or Body incorporate by a Royal Charter, endowed with certain privileges and immunities as the South Sea and India Companies, or the Bank of England'. Nor dare any of his hearers speak one word in their behalf, whilst the worthy burgess 'declaimed without mercy, libelled, and aggravated like a Bill in Chancery'.[2] For much of this unpopularity the clergy had only themselves to blame. The violent displays of temper which had marked their controversies during the reign of Anne, the association of Churchmanship with hatred of Dissenters, the inculcation of theories of Passive Obedience and Non-Resistance, the extravagances of the High Church mob and the acerbities of the Convocation disputes, had all contributed to the loss of respect for their sacred office. Further the Deists had given a prominent place in their polemic against Christianity to the unworthy lives and extravagant claims of its

[1] 'The Bishop or no Bishop, or the Disappointed Doctor', London, n.d., C. Procter, Bp. Gibson Pamphlets, xv. 17, Sion College Library; cf. a repulsive description of the characteristics of the clergy:

The quaint grimace, the guileful sneer,
The pride of mind with lowliness profess'd
The sanctity of brow instead of breast,
The spite at heart with smiles upon the face,
The want of morals and the boast of grace
. . . the double tongue, the double jole,
The extended paunch and narrowness of soul,
The cant, the cringe, the gloomy buckram air.

in 'The Seasonable Reproof', A Satire, London, L. Gilliver, 1735, ibid. xviii. 4.

[2] 'The Contempt of the Clergy Considered; in a Letter to a Friend.' By an impartial hand, London, 1739, R. Minors. Sion College Library, Bp. Gibson Pamphlets, 45, B. 23, No. 1. This is a valuable pamphlet, giving a review of the complaints urged against the clergy, a moderate defence of their conduct, with suggestions for the reform of certain glaring abuses, and a suggestive examination of the relative standards of clerical and lay morality.

ministers, so that many were now persuaded that priestcraft was the greatest of all evil machinations. 'It was now well understood by all enlightened men, that the whole sacerdotal brood were but a set of impostors, who lived by deceiving the people and who had invented religion for their own benefit.'[1] On the contrary much of the abuse came from the numerous host of free-livers, who were glad by this means to cast off the restraints of conscience and religion. There is evidence that 'there were in many country villages clergymen of distinguished learning and piety, who were, as it were, buried alive among the vicious and the ignorant and in a manner excluded from all the comfort of social life';[2] and who, if they were reviled by the local gentry, owed it to the fact that they had ventured to reprove their 'illiterate, sottish, and profane' habits. It was doubtless true in many cases that the squire, being himself addicted to the fashionable weaknesses of immorality and scepticism preferred to encourage and entertain in his household a clergyman of lax principles. Unfortunately for the good reputation of the Church there were some ministers of the latter sort, who, although in a small minority, nevertheless brought discredit upon the better class. A contemporary writer relates a personal experience which befell him during a visit to a large country house in Somerset. 'There was indeed a clergyman in the house, who had quite laid aside his sacerdotal character, but acted in several lay capacities, as valet de chambre, butler, gamekeeper, pot-companion, butt, and buffoon, who never read prayers nor so much as said grace.' This coxcomb 'was always mentioned with the familiar appellation of Honest Harry, a merry good-natured fellow as ever broke bread', whilst the Vicar, whom the guest discovered by personal intercourse to be a pious, serious, and educated priest, was always reviled by the host as 'a proud, unmannerly, sour pedant, who could never be an agreeable companion to people of taste and politeness'.[3] Thus it is probable that no small share of the contempt which was poured upon the order

[1] Mark Pattison in *Essays and Reviews*, p. 318.
[2] 'The Contempt of the Clergy Considered,' p. 27.
[3] Ibid. 27 seq.

as a whole was provoked by the comparatively few clergy whose lives disgraced their profession, and that in part also it was deliberately invented by those gentry, high and low, who loved to salve their own consciences by finding a parson who would behave as wickedly as themselves, and who would 'sacrifice his duty and conscience to a merry-meeting, would be as lewd and profane as the rest of the company over his bottle, and even blasphemous for a good dinner'.[1] When scribblers could bring an accusation of immorality against a prelate of Bishop Gibson's known character, who was not only an unwearied preacher of the imperative obligations of morality and religion, but also a severe inquisitor into the morals of his clergy, it is evident that their testimony cannot be accepted without criticism.[2]

Passing to the definite charges which are usually levelled against the Churchmen of this period, the most common are those relating to episcopal negligence. The non-residence of the Hanoverian bishops has passed into a proverb. The classic cases are those of Hoadly who held the see of Bangor for six years without ever visiting the diocese, and of Bishop Watson at a later date. But in 1727 the town of Sunderland complained that the Bishop of Durham (Talbot) had not resided there since the death of Anne, so that they could neither secure the consecration of a new church, nor any other episcopal offices, their grievance being aggravated by the fact that the Archdeacon of Durham was Dean of Bristol, and the Chancellor of the diocese resided at Trinity Hall, Cambridge.[3] In this respect Gibson had an enviable record. His devotion to duty during his long residence of twenty-four years in London had been so thorough that he could say in 1747 that 'in all that time he had not stept once out of his own diocese'.[4] Although this exceptional record was made possible by the peculiar circumstance whereby his attendances at Court and in Parliament could both be discharged without leaving his

[1] Ibid., p. 36.

[2] 'Dr. Codex's Fifth Pastoral', London, 1734, T. Cooper, xv. 16, Sion College Library, makes a scandalous accusation against Gibson's character.

[3] 'Complaint of the Town of Sunderland', 1727, S. P. Dom. Geo. I, B. 66.

[4] Gibson to the Duke of Newcastle, 1747, B.M. Add. MS. 32711, No. 69.

cathedral city, nevertheless during the few years of his episcopate at Lincoln he had been a diligent diocesan bishop, coming to London only during the parliamentary session or whenever other urgent business compelled it, and spending the rest of his time in the business of his office. The question of the extent to which the bishops generally did reside in their dioceses was certainly one needing careful inquiry, and among the list of 'things fitt to be done for the Church', in which Gibson had sketched a programme of necessary reforms which he hoped to attempt, was the significant item, 'bishops not to be in Town longer than their parliamentary attendance requires.'[1]

Next to the complaints of episcopal non-residence, nothing aroused more criticism and hostility than the practices of translation and of commendams.

The former custom seems innocent in itself, and calculated to serve the best interests of the Church. But it was vigorously attacked as encouraging avarice and ambition, making the bishops too dependent upon the Ministry, and as a corrupt declension from apostolical precedent, and a motion was made in the House of Commons in 1731, for leave to introduce a bill to put a stop to the practice.[2] Accordingly Gibson set down his thoughts upon the matter and prepared a line of defence in case the attack was pushed farther. He felt that a law to prohibit translations wholly would be unwise in view of the great inequalities of bishoprics in point of revenue, extent, and difficulty of administration. If such a measure were passed, 'presbyters of figure and learning, who were already possessed of tolerable promotions', would not be willing to accept a small bishopric, which would only increase their expenditure without

[1] Gibson, 'Things Fitt to be done for the Church', Gibson MSS. vii. 7.

[2] e. g. 'The Court Bishop no Apostolical Bishop', London, J. Roberts, 1732, where translations are condemned as 'utterly against the ancient Canons' and as proceeding 'from the known motives of avarice and ambition'. Sion College, Bp. Gibson Pamphlets, 43, B. 7, No. 13; and 'The Dean of Winchester, His Character of the English Clergy, with a dedication to the Author, by a Member of the Lower House of Convocation', in the preface to which a similar attack is made upon 'the right of being translated', ibid. 43, A. 15, No. 5.

adding proportionately to their income and would preclude them from the hope of ' coming into more easy and comfortable circumstances in their old age, and being put into a condition to make a suitable provision for their families '. In like manner the conditions of the present episcopate would not be improved by such a reform, for on the one hand, a prelate who had spent his strength in a large and exacting diocese, could not be removed to one of less fatigue and labour, nor on the other, could a younger bishop, who had gained an understanding of the duties of the episcopal office in one of the lesser sees, be promoted to an administration of greater difficulty and variety. Gibson was, therefore, driven to conclude that ' the practice of translations, if duly regulated, was not only no detriment, but in many cases a real benefit to the Church '. He admitted, however, that it was liable to abuse, especially when one person was removed too quickly from one see to another. He had protested against the too rapid rise of Hoadly to favour, and could not rid himself of the feeling that such a circumstance was very prejudicial both to the Church and the bishops. It had a very bad effect upon the diocese, the business of which became disorganized by the brevity of the successive episcopates, and it was a great temptation to the bishop himself to regard his present station as a temporary appointment, and to divert his attention to securing a further advancement. Nothing could give a better handle to the enemies of the Bench ' to represent them as worldly-minded men ', or to insinuate that their support of the Court in Parliament was ' not the effect of judgement, but the way to entitle them to the favour of translations '. Therefore, his own proposal would be—and this also was recorded in the catalogue of desirable reforms—that ' no bishop should be allowed more than one translation, nor that till he had continued full seven years in his first bishopric '.[1] The failure of the motion in the Commons, however, destroyed the possibility of practical reform.

The question of commendams was more urgent than that of translations, because it was more immediately and con-

[1] Gibson, 'The Case of Translation of Bishops' Gibson MSS. vii. 40 a.

spicuously offensive to the public mind. The extent to which this practice had grown can be best understood by a consideration of some of the typical cases of the century. When Dr. Robert Clavering was raised to the see of Llandaff in 1724, he was allowed to retain the deanery and a canonry of Hereford, a canonry of Christ Church and the Hebrew Professorship in the University, and the rectory of Marsh Gibbon, Bucks.[1] Bishop Hare, as Bishop of St. Asaph and Chichester successively, held the deanery and a canonry of St. Paul's in commendam for thirteen years, and after his death both were given to Butler to eke out his bishopric at Bristol. Atterbury, Wilcocks, and Pearce in turn enjoyed the profits of the deanery of Westminster with the see of Rochester, whilst Bishop Mawson established a similar connexion between the deanery of Wells and the see of Llandaff. These are examples of quite moderate commendams, so that little surprise can be occasioned by the vigorous chorus of denunciation which proceeded from all the pamphleteers. It became a matter of universal observation that

> Scarce will a prelate take a See,
> Without Commendam Deanery.[2]

Despite the noisy clamour which was raised against episcopal avarice, Gibson was prepared to justify commendams to a considerable degree. He granted that the most desirable state of affairs would be, that the fixed and standing revenue of every see should be a competent support to the character and expenses of the episcopal station; but until this ideal was realized he was convinced that 'the next thing to be wished

[1] 'Commendam of the Bishop of Llandaff', 1724, S. P. Dom. Geo. I, B. 54,

[2] 'The Bishop or No Bishop', London, n.d., C. Procter. Bp. Gibson Pamphlets, xv. 17, Sion College Library; cf. 'A Dissuasive from Entering into Holy Orders', London, 1732. 'Who now expects a bishop shall preach? Who can refuse them Commendams?' Ibid. 43, B. 7, No. 6; cf. 'All are not Sheep that wear sheep's clothing'. Mr. True Friend's Letter to a Rt. Rev. Prelate of our Church: 'the covetousness of those who would secure the highest places in the Church and yet must hold their Commendams.' Ibid., No. 11; also cf.:

> Like other priests when to small Sees you send 'em
> Let ours hold fat-goose Living in Commendam.

R. Savage, 'The Progress of a Divine', 1735.

was that all opportunities were taken to bring commendams, if not to a certainty, at least to a probability, of their going along with the particular bishoprics which needed them and to which they were properly suited in point of value and situation '. He pointed out the cases of the see of Rochester and the deanery of Westminster, and of the bishopric of Llandaff and the deanery of Wells (the latter combination being mainly due to his own efforts and influence) as proper examples of this. But he was anxious to regularize the system of granting commendams, and thought it would be useful if a law were passed, defining which bishoprics stood not in need of any commendam, which required only a temporary provision, for two or three years at the most, in order to enable the bishop to bear the expense of coming in, and, in the case of those which required commendams in perpetuity, ordering the same in such manner that ' they did not rise higher in point of value than to make the annual revenue of those bishoprics equal to that of those sees which were restrained to temporary commendams '.[1] For such a limited use of commendams there was much to be said, and Gibson himself had acted upon these principles when he was raised to the bishopric of Lincoln in February 1716. He had taken out a warrant to hold in commendam the rectory of Lambeth, and the canonry and precentorship of Chichester, together with the mastership of the hospital of St. Mary in the same city and attached to the canonry (all of which he was then holding) until the following November, in order to cover the expenses of his new establishment.[2]

One of the chief ill effects of the laxity in respect of episcopal residence and of the tendency to press for further translation, was seen in the grave neglect into which the rite of Confirmation fell. In the preceding century Baxter had complained that owing to the unwieldy size of the English dioceses, and the anxiety of the bishops to get through their duties quickly, this sacred ordinance had borne the appearance of ' a running

[1] Gibson, ' The Case of Commendams ', Gibson MSS. vii. 40 b.
[2] Gibson to Wake, 31 Jan. 1715/16, Wake MSS. xx, vol. iv, Miscellaneous Letters and Papers, 1715–18.

ceremony' and 'a game for boys'.[1] With the increasing tendency on the part of bishops to spend more time in attendance upon the Court, the disuse of this Office became more marked. A good many bishops were absent from their dioceses more than half the year, and in some cases the extent of the territory they had to cover was so great that they could not have discharged all their duties conscientiously in the full twelvemonth. Lincoln, for example, had thirteen hundred parishes. In the case of a prelate who did not visit his diocese at all, Confirmation was quite neglected. Archbishop Blackburne left his successor in the see of York 'an arrear of twelve years' neglect' in this respect, so that it was claimed that Herring in his first year confirmed over thirty thousand people.[2] Even in more regular cases, the bishop often confirmed only once in three years. The sixtieth Canon ordered that the rite should be administered triennially, and in consequence it was usually joined to the work of visitation. Therefore, 'when the bishop kept his triennial visitation, and a great number of parishes were obliged to attend at each place appointed for it, the noise, the tumult and the indecency with which the young people crowded to the chancel, looked more like the diversions of a bear garden than the solemn performance of an apostolical office.' Also 'the great number that attended, the shortness of the time allotted and the manifold avocations to other parts of his duty' prevented the Bishop from performing the ceremony 'with that decency and regularity, which such holy offices required'.[3] Whiston was deeply offended to see the ceremony done 'in such a hurry and disorder that it hardly deserved the name of a sacred ordinance of Christianity'.[4] In cases where its administration was more infrequent than the triennial visitation, another evil result followed in that parents either presented their children at an immature age, or deferred the matter until the unfortunate youths had often sunk into vice and were disinclined to offer themselves.

[1] Baxter, 'English Nonconformity', quoted in Abbey and Overton, *The English Church in the Eighteenth Century*, ii, p. 502.

[2] Pyle, *Memoirs of a Royal Chaplain*, ed. Hartshorne, pp. 74, 88.

[3] 'The Contempt of the Clergy Considered', London, 1739, Bp. Gibson Pamphlets, 45, B. 23, No. 1, Sion College.

[4] Whiston, *Memoirs*, p. 469.

Accordingly, Gibson gave particular attention to this branch of his duties and endeavoured to raise the ordinance to a worthier position of esteem in the minds of his clergy and their congregations. The experience of his first Visitation at Lincoln had taught him the impossibility of combining the administration of Confirmation with the other multifarious business of a less spiritual kind and had driven him to the decision to separate it. Therefore, he had established special Confirmation circuits, and had felt the need of the consecration of suffragan bishops to assist in the work of such a large diocese.[1] After his translation to London he had developed this scheme. From the first he held Confirmations almost every year, and later he increased the number as occasion demanded, so that the regularity of his administration of the rite within the city became a noticeable feature of his episcopate.[2] He also issued a series of instructions to his clergy in order to make its actual performance more edifying. In these he gave a brief explanation of the nature and purpose of Confirmation, and added directions in regard to the administration. He charged churchwardens to see that their church was properly fitted for the performance of the ceremony ; that rails were placed to prevent the crowd from breaking in upon the chancel, that a convenient space from the rails of the Communion Table was kept clear, in which the candidates could stand quiet and undisturbed ; and that the children from each parish were gathered together in a separate group, ready to be presented by their own minister to the Bishop. Further, he admonished the clergy to instruct their children ' to behave themselves decently and reverently at the time of Confirmation ' ; and to warn them ' that they were not to depart as soon as they had received the imposition of hands, but to wait there, in the Quire, till the prayers which follow had been repeated and they had been regularly dismissed with the blessing '.[3] By these directions, Gibson hoped

[1] Gibson to Charlett, Ballard MSS. vi. 76. See *supra*, c. iii, pp. 75–6.

[2] ' The Nature, Design, and Benefits of Confirmation '. Dr. J. Denne, London, 1726, remarks that Gibson ' is so diligent in the discharge of his trust as to do even more than he is obliged to by the Canon, making it a standing rule to himself to hold Confirmations almost every year ', 43. E. 7, No. 8, Sion College. The ' Courses of Confirmation ' which Gibson established are noticed in Mist's *Weekly Journal* of Saturday, 24th August 1728, No. 175.

[3] Gibson, ' Directions to Ministers and People in order to a Confirmation '.

that the actual service might be made more edifying to all participators.

There remained the question of preparation and instruction, and to this also he gave careful consideration. It was a point of great importance that parents should not present their children until they had reached a suitable age. Owing to the infrequency of Confirmations, parents 'for fear of losing the happy opportunity of being confirmed', were apt to encourage their offspring to offer themselves in their tender years. Dr. Denne affirmed that some presented them 'almost while they had them in their arms, or at least while they were of a most incompetent age',[1] and Gibson himself expressed the wish that 'they would not be so zealous to bring their children . . . so long before they could possibly think them fit to receive the Sacrament'.[2] As to the actual definition of a suitable age, Lyndwood, in a gloss upon a Constitution of Archbishop Walter, determined no one to be adult till he was above fourteen years of age, and Gibson was willing, therefore, in compliance with received practice, to accept this as a satisfactory minimum. But since the Church of England, according to Canon 112, did not oblige any to receive the Holy Communion until they were of the age of sixteen years, he wished that parents would think this 'a more proper time for their children to be confirmed'. Two considerations influenced him in the adoption of this position. He was convinced that 'the plain reason why such numbers of those who were confirmed, did afterwards utterly disregard the Lord's Table was, that they were confirmed so long before they were really fit to come to it, and either did not know, or had forgotten that one end of their Confirmation was to prepare them for it'.[3] Also it was of the utmost importance in the present age of universal inquiry and speculation in matters of religion that Christians should be able to give an answer to all who challenged their adherence to traditional beliefs. Therefore, he urged two things particularly upon both parents and clergy, that the former should take care that their

[1] Denne, 'The Nature, Design, and Benefits of Confirmation', 1726.
[2] Gibson, 'Directions', § vi.
[3] Ibid., § iv, 'Catechism'.

boys and girls were already able to repeat the Catechism before they were sent for instruction to the minister, and that the latter being relieved of that part of the work which depended on the memory should 'apply with greater diligence to the understandings of the children by such easy explanations as might let them into the sense and meaning of what they had committed to memory, and lead them into further degrees of Christian knowledge'. By this means the preparation of candidates for Confirmation would involve 'not the barely being able to say their Catechism by rote, but the giving some proof that they understood the principles and duties of religion'.[1] Thus by a careful attention to the reverent performance of the ordinance, and by exhortations to his clergy to fulfil their duties as teachers, Gibson endeavoured to raise the rite of Confirmation from the general disrespect into which it was falling, and to discharge his own responsibilities in this regard.

As the Bishop of London was distinguished among his brethren by the assiduity with which he applied himself to his diocesan business, so his clergy seem to provide the exception against the general sentence of slackness and inefficiency which is passed upon their order as a whole. At any rate this is true of the ministers of the City churches, even though some modification might be necessary in the case of the rural and outlying parts of the diocese. 'It must be owned that the clergy in and about Town had no reason to complain of contempt, they had their full portion of esteem and respect.'[2] A glance at the statistics of services held in the churches of the metropolis does not suggest a lack of spiritual life and alertness. Of the 111 churches, representing 144 parishes in London, Westminster and the suburbs, 3 had four services every weekday, 2 performed services thrice daily, 26 twice, 12 once, whilst 62 observed only Wednesday and Friday, and 2 held services only one day in the week. There were also 8 churches with a weekly celebration of the Holy Communion, 3 which performed the rite three Sundays in every month, and the remainder

[1] Ibid.

[2] 'The Contempt of the Clergy Considered', London, 1739.

maintained a monthly observance. In addition there were no fewer than 189 endowments of special sermons, lectures, &c. Truly, as Sir Walter Besant remarks, even at this period when the Church is supposed to have been at its lowest ebb, 'in London at least it was far from stagnation.'[1] Such a number of daily services and additional lectures are evidence of a keen interest in religious matters.

In the more remote parts of the diocese, the condition of things was naturally not so satisfactory. Four hundred and sixty-six returns were made to the queries sent out by Gibson preparatory to his Visitation of 1741–2, which shed a penetrating light upon the state of the country parishes. In 236 parishes Divine Service was performed twice every Sunday, in 210 only once, whilst there were 16 cases in which a fortnightly service was held, and 4 in which it was only performed monthly. With regard to week-day services, 37 churches observed Wednesday, Friday, and the Holy Days, 17 confined their observance to the special season of Lent, and 7 maintained daily service throughout the year. The Holy Communion was generally celebrated at the three great festivals, and on one or two additional occasions, such as Michaelmas or Harvest time, 380 churches holding between four and ten celebrations annually. A monthly celebration was held in 66 parishes, whilst 18 could not attain to the minimum of four times per year, and two parishes only failed to send in a definite answer to this query. Among the eighteen instances of infrequent administration, the minister of Saling Barfield, in the deanery of Sampford, reported that he had neither utensils nor surplice wherewith to perform the ordinance; the minister of Salcote Wigborow, in the deanery of Lexden, stated that he had celebrated the Holy Communion on Good Friday, 4th April 1735, but that it had not been administered before for the space of forty years owing to lack of communicants, whilst in the parish of Steeple, of which he was also vicar, there had not been sufficient communicants for the last two years to justify a celebration according to the rubric; the minister of Layer

[1] Sir Walter Besant, *London in the Eighteenth Century*, Appendix I, London, 1902.

Breton likewise regretted that he had 'no sort of encouragement to administer the Lord's Supper'; in the parishes both of North and South Fambridge, in the deanery of Dengey, great difficulty was found in gathering a congregation, and of the ten families which constituted the parish of Chickney, and of which the majority were Dissenters, a sufficient number could never be gathered. In two churches the Sacrament was celebrated on Good Friday, at Brentwood according to custom, where it was only administered once more in the year, and at Edmonton, where there was a monthly celebration.[1]

It must not be supposed, however, that the comparative infrequency of the celebrations of the Holy Communion, and the large number of cases in which Divine Service was only performed once per Sunday were necessarily signs of the idleness or indifference of the clergy. The public performance of Divine Service only once per week was due to the practical difficulties of the situation. In parishes where the total population was inconsiderable; where the church was distant from the houses of the inhabitants and the roads well nigh impassable in winter; where there happened to be a neighbouring church nearer than that of the parish to which the people belonged, the services of which were held alternately with those of their own church; and where the income of the living was insufficient to maintain a minister, who was driven either to accept a local curacy, or to hold another benefice in plurality; in all these cases it was necessary to be content with the single service, arranged at the hour most convenient for the parishioners.

The problem of pluralities was an exceedingly delicate one, which could not be settled off hand by abstract theories. After the hard words which had been used of the clergy in both Houses of Parliament in the debates on the Mortmain Act and the Quakers' Bill of 1736, Gibson, fearing that an attack would be made in the next session upon the practices of pluralities and non-residence, endeavoured to obtain a general survey of

[1] There are four volumes of Returns relating to the Visitation of 1741–2 (of which the fullest record is preserved) in the Library of St. Paul's Cathedral, from which these statistics are compiled; these returns do not contain any reference to the City churches; there are similar, but less complete, records of the other Visitations of Gibson.

the state of his diocese. He had the wisdom to understand that practical solutions must be devised for practical problems, that his only possible policy was to strive to correct the worst irregularities, and to leave the majority of parishes in the *status quo* until some permanent improvements could be effected. He was very anxious that Divine Service should be performed worthily and not hurriedly, and exhorted his clergy to remember 'that the edification of the people and the honour of the liturgy itself depended a great deal upon the manner of performing it, that is, upon reading it audibly, distinctly, and solemnly'.[1] Therefore, he was determined to discourage 'all attempts in ministers to charge themselves with the performing of Divine Service on any Lord's Day more than twice'. He required the rector of Great Braxted (in the deanery of Witham) who also held the living of Little Oakley (in the deanery of Tendring) to resign the curacy of Lawford and institute a resident curate at Oakley, in order that the services might be regularly performed at all three places. But he yielded in some cases on the point of three services per Sunday. Mr. Thomas Bateman, the vicar of Good Easter, arranged his duties to the satisfaction of his lordship, submitting to him the following account of his activities.

'At Good Easter the Service is alternately, and when it is in the morning, I always begin at 10 of the clock, from whence I go on to Berners Roothing about a mile and a half from Good Easter, which your Lordship knows is served but once per fortnight, it being barely £12 per annum, and, being in the afternoon by the desire of the parishioners, I begin in the summer about a quarter of an hour before 2, and in the winter half an hour before 2. From whence I proceed without delay to Shellow (where the service is also alternately) a short mile from Berners Roothing.'

In like manner the rector of Tillingham performed service every Sunday at Dengey and St. Lawrence also,[2] but permission was

[1] Gibson, 'Charge to the Clergy of his Diocese', 1724.

[2] Mr. George Cowperthwaite wrote, 4th Dec. 1742, to explain his system: 'I have . . . sent you the clearest account I can at what time of the day and in what manner, the three churches of Tillingham, Dengey and St. Lawrence are served. They are about a mile distant from each other and there is

refused to Mr. Cressfield to take three services on Sunday at Mount Buers, Buers St. Mary's, and Little Tay respectively.[1] The principle upon which Gibson seems to have acted was that if the stipend of the living were sufficient, in case of non-residence on the part of the incumbent he must provide a curate, and not offer the duty to a neighbouring vicar who would have to take three services.

Similarly, Gibson attempted to enforce the performance of Divine Service twice every Lord's Day in cases where the income was a sufficient maintenance. Thus he secured the fulfilment of this duty at Easthorp, by compelling the rector, who also held the curacy of Fordham, to provide a resident curate; at Great Holland by stimulating the incumbent himself to greater activity, and also at Stanway; whilst the incumbent of Stonedon Massey in reply to his lordship's inquiry 'whether the humour of his parishioners . . . still continued, of not coming to Church of Sundays in the afternoon' gave the assurance that 'he had been doing his utmost to get them off that odd humour ever since he had been possessed of the living, and hoped he had gained his point in that respect, for he performed Divine Service to them twice every Lord's Day and he found that in an afternoon he had sometimes a tolerable good congregation'; and he added the suggestive information 'that when there was a sermon, there was three times the number as when there were prayers only'.[2]

There were many parishes where the command of the Bishop and the efforts of the rector could not succeed in establishing a double service. The incumbent of Great and Little Birch strove hard to persuade his parishioners to attend twice every

constant service at all the three every Sunday. Tillingham and Dengy are served morning and afternoon alternately, and St. Lawrence has service always in the afternoon, except upon Sacrament days, which are monthly at Tillingham and four times a year at each of the other two. I begin always at Tillingham or Dengy at 10 o'clock in the morning and at a quarter after 3 in the afternoon, and I begin at St. Lawrence at 2 in the afternoon, except at this time of the year, when the shortness of the days obliges me to begin somewhat sooner in the afternoon for the convenience of the farmers.'

[1] Gibson to Philip Morant, 11 Oct. 1745, B.M. Add. MS., Correspondence of Dr. P. Morant, 37221, No. 206.

[2] T. Smith to Bp. Gibson, 18 Jan. 1736, 'Salaries and Curates', vol. ii, 'Roding Eythorp'.

Sunday but without avail. In 1736 he reported that he had no congregation in the afternoon, 'having sometimes the sexton and two or three women, sometimes none but the sexton', in 1738 he was holding two services 'when any would attend, which was hardly to be obtained in the summer, and in the winter not at all', whilst in 1742 he had finally abandoned the attempt 'because after a very long trial, he could not persuade them to come twice'.[1] Similarly, Mr. Hatsell of Rivenhall assured the Bishop that he could not secure an afternoon congregation in the winter months, for 'the parish was so straggling and the houses so far distant from the Church' that on the last Sunday 'there were none but five or six children'; and the rector of Radwinter found that 'the dirtyness of the country and the wideness of the parish' defeated all his efforts to hold service twice in winter. Dr. Philip Morant, who was rector of St. Mary's, Colchester, and a personal friend of the Bishop, was deputed by him to inquire into the reasons for the performance of Divine Service only once at Aldham, and reported that not only was there a long-standing tradition in favour of this usage, but 'the most considerable part of Aldham parish (which contained above twenty houses out of the forty-nine which the parish consisted of) was a mile and a half from the church and a very dirty walk in winter, but it was not above three-quarters of a mile at most from Fordham Church. Divine Service was always alternately at Aldham and Fordham, by which means the inhabitants of Aldham had the same in effect as two sermons a day'.[2] In fact, wherever there was a possibility of hearing a sermon at a neighbouring church, people would not repair to their own parish church merely to be present at the reading of prayers. In relation to the particular case of Aldham, Gibson himself acknowledged that all reports seemed to agree in stating 'that Fordham being so near, many of the parishioners would go thither once a day rather than come to prayers in their own church' and added that 'the same had been often pleaded in other places by way of excuse from

[1] M. Gibbin to Bp. Gibson, 17 Dec. 1736, 'Salaries and Curates', vol. i, 'Birch Magna and Parva'; and Visitation Returns for Birch, 1738 and 1742.
[2] P. Morant to Bp. Gibson, 7 Jan. 1744/5, B.M. Add. MS. 37221, No. 159.

double duty, namely, that the people would go where the sermon was '.[1] Therefore, since ' two sermons a day was what he could not enforce by law in the same church ', he had to accept ' the evil of the people's not relishing the service singly ', and bow to the inevitable.[2]

It is evident from the above figures of the comparative infrequency of the celebrations of the Holy Communion, and of the large number of parishes in which Divine Service was only performed once per week, that the pastoral ideal of the ministry was little developed in the eighteenth century. In the mouths of the enemies of the Church this gave opportunity for grave blasphemy. ' The clergy don't come near the people from Sunday to Sunday ', wrote Chubb. ' He just comes to read the service, and when it is done the horse is ready at the hatch to carry him off.' [3] It is more just to say that the general standards of the age did not demand more of the clergy than the performance of Divine Service weekly, a quarterly celebration of the Eucharist, and a special visit to read the Occasional Offices. The sermon was the most attractive feature of public worship. Lectureships were very popular and very numerous in the City, and in the rural parts of the diocese a good sermon could always command a good congregation. The shortcomings of the century are not to be ascribed to the personal idleness of the minister. The eighteenth century had no system of religious education, and the insufficient maintenance of most livings made it impossible to procure a resident clergy, to whom this task might have been committed. The only means which the minister had of attempting such a work was the catechetical instruction of the young, and there were many causes beside that of non-residence which militated against the proper fulfilment of this duty. Very frequently parents were lax in sending their children, and when they did send them the minister often found that his audience must be taught to read the Catechism before they could learn it. In country parishes also, the children could hardly come to church in winter because of the badness of the roads, and in summer

[1] Gibson to P. Morant, ibid., No. 146. [2] Ibid., No. 147.
[3] Chubb, ' True Gospel of Jesus Christ asserted ', § 13.

they were often engaged in the fields, turning the opportunities of daylight and sunshine to the best advantage in the cultivation of crops. The usual season for regular weekly instruction, therefore, was that of Lent, and it is obvious that under these limitations not much could be done. On the one hand, the laborious lives of the farmers, their lack of social intercourse and material comforts and their consequent illiteracy and misery, and on the other, the poverty of the clergy, the additional services which they had to perform on Sundays, and the lack of facilities for education in their parishes, were circumstances sufficient to account for the meagre results of religious effort in the eighteenth century.

Naturally the bishops devoted considerable space in their Charges to exhortations concerning the importance of pastoral duties, and although their efforts helped to restore a truer conception of the office of the clergy, they could not effect much in the way of actual reform under existing conditions. Bishop Gibson pleaded for a greater zeal in the performance of those duties which, though not 'expressly enforced by laws and penalties', were yet binding 'by a more sacred tie, the obligation of duty and conscience'. He enumerated these obligations; to admonish privately all notorious evil-livers; 'to be able to resolve all the difficulties which relate to conscience by a competent knowledge in casuistical divinity'; to visit the sick and teach them to regard their affliction as a warning from God to amend their lives, and to endeavour to establish regular family prayers in every household in their parish. Above all, he exhorted his clergy to remember that there was 'a daily and hourly lesson to their people, without which all other lessons were fruitless and vain', which consisted in the example of a good life, set by the clergy themselves, 'not only in the negative degrees . . . the not being drunkards nor swearers, nor profane, nor unclean, but that goodness which consisted in the steady and uniform exercise of the graces and virtues of the Christian life.'[1] Gibson's charges were full of sound counsel and sympathetic understanding.

On the difficult question of pluralities, Gibson published a brief

[1] Gibson, 'Charge', 1724, pp. 22–4.

pamphlet of 'Considerations upon Pluralities, Non Residence and Salaries of Curates', containing his mature judgement of the case. He suggested that 'a well-meaning zeal might not always be attended with cool and sedate thinking, nor have patience enough to weigh the points it was pursuing with the deliberation they required and deserved, especially when a true state of things could not be come at without a more exact and diligent search than persons of a warm imagination could easily submit to'. It was to guard against any attempts at a reformation 'without due knowledge, or proceeding by improper methods', that he had set forth his thoughts, based upon the evidence of his own diocese, in this public manner. First he pointed out that the abuses connected with pluralities had been far greater in pre-Reformation times than in any subsequent century. By Canon 41, the possession of pluralities had been confined to persons who were thought 'very well worthy for their learning', and were of the degree of Master of Arts at least, and the maximum distance between two benefices so held had been fixed at thirty miles. Next he maintained that under proper regulations, the system so hastily condemned might prove of actual advantage to the Church. In the case of small livings, the income of which did not afford a sufficient maintenance, pluralities were unavoidable; and of this circumstance every diocese offered too many examples. Of a similar nature was the problem of churches in market towns, where, owing to the inequalities of endowments, 'it had so fallen out that the churches, generally speaking, were the most meanly provided for of any others', despite the fact that in such centres of population the cures should be placed 'in the most prudent and able hands'.[1] A particular instance was to be found in the town of Colchester, where the income of St. Martin's Church was only £3 per year plus an augmentation of £5 from Queen Anne's Bounty, that of St. Remwald's was 'no more than £1 1s. per annum certain', and St. Nicholas's 'had no other certain profit belonging to it, but a parsonage house let to

[1] Gibson, 'Some Considerations upon Pluralities, Non-Residence and Salaries of Curates', London, 1737. Bp. Gibson Pamphlets, Sion College, 45. B. 17, No. 5, p. 10.

a tradesman for £6 10s. a year'.[1] As a result of this state of affairs the first two churches had been allowed to fall into a ruinous condition, and Divine Service was almost entirely discontinued there. The only method of avoiding such disasters was to allow the incumbent to hold a country benefice, as was done in the case of Dr. Philip Morant, the rector of St. Mary's, or of Mr. J. Milton, the incumbent of St. James's, whose living was £40 per annum, to which was added the cure of Lexden. Bishop Gibson himself cordially approved of this arrangement, believing it 'a great service to religion when worthy and able men officiating in cities and market towns were supported in the faithful and diligent discharge of their duty by the addition of a country living of better value and few inhabitants'. He also considered it 'another advantage', when pluralities fell 'into such worthy and able hands as the Law supposed', so that the younger curates were working 'under a wise and experienced director of their studies and conduct by which they were prepared to be prudent and useful pastors when they came to have benefices of their own'. Such a case was that of Dr. Denne who held the livings of Lambeth and St. Leonard's, Shoreditch, together with a prebend of Rochester, and under whom two curates were trained, receiving the benefit of his counsel and experience.

Another laudable aim of the system of pluralities was to encourage the clergy resident in the Universities, because 'a greater progress in the study of Divinity required more ample rewards' and the provision of such rewards was 'a strong motive and encouragement' to the younger presbyters to devote themselves to serious study. Thus the Provost of Queen's College, Oxford, held the living of Paddington, the Principal of Brasenose that of Whitechapel, the Vice-Principal of St. Edmund Hall that of Gosfield, and the Head of Bennet College, Cambridge, that of Hadstock. Mr. S. Croxall, replying to the Bishop's inquiry concerning his residence in his living of Hampton, presented a list of his other preferments, as Prebendary and Lecturer of Hereford Cathedral, Archdeacon of Salop, Chaplain to the King, and Vicar of St. Mary Somerset,

[1] Philip Morant to Bp. Gibson, 19 Aug. 1742. Visitation Returns, 1741, 'Colchester', St. Paul's Cathedral.

London, with the observation that 'a plurality of small benefices might make one obnoxious to the censures of the ignorant, when it was but a vexatious kind of preferment to oneself'.[1] In the case of non-residence through other causes it was again necessary that a wide discretionary power should be left to the Bishop. In cases of ill health, of the lack of a parsonage house, or other suitable dwelling, and the demands of sudden temporary avocations, the letter of the law must be broken and non-residence permitted. When such questions arose in his own diocese, Gibson was just and considerate.

The determination of the salaries of curates also was left to the Ordinary, who was required to fix 'a competent and sufficient salary'. The standard, however, was variable, for Gibson considered it reasonable that 'the person who had the advantage of two livings should be rated higher than he who was absent on account of ill health or other necessary avocations, and had nothing but a single benefice to maintain him and his family'. Therefore he endeavoured to secure a stipend of £30 to £35 in cases where he required a non-resident incumbent to maintain a full-time curate in his parish. By an Act of 12 Anne the limits of curates' salaries had been fixed at a minimum of £20 and a maximum of £50. Generally speaking, however, the great majority of curates received between £30 and £45. The situation of the diocese of London caused it to be plagued by a large number of supernumerary priests, who having neither benefice nor fixed curacy, formed a floating element in its clerical population, and were open for hire to perform occasional duty.

> At Coffee house that 's nigh St. Paul's
> The meaner p[arson]s have their calls,
> On Saturdays the papers ply
> Like watermen at clearest sky.
> Men ply to preach and read the prayer
> From half-a-crown to guinea fair.[2]

[1] 'Salaries and Curates', vol. i, 'Hampton', St. Paul's Cathedral, 17 E. 24.

[2] 'The Bishop or No Bishop', London, C. Procter, Bp. Gibson Pamphlets, xv. 17, Sion College; cf. 'The Female Speaker or The Priests in the Wrong', London, 1735:

> The hawking preachers hire for half a day
> And give 'em half-a-crown to preach or pray.

B.M. 11602, i. 5.

Only four instances were mentioned in the Visitation Returns of parishes which were served by these wandering presbyters, and in three cases the sum paid was half a guinea for service and sermon, the fourth eight shillings, with a mention of five shillings as the fee for reading prayers without sermon. The presence of a considerable number of strolling clergy whose characters were unknown, was dangerous not only to the orderly administration of the diocese, but also to the standard of clerical morality, for some of the intruders proved to be persons of irregular behaviour. Gibson accordingly did his utmost to prevent their influx into his diocese, by refusing to ordain any one who had not a bona-fide title, and by urging his clergy not to sign any testimonials on behalf of candidates not personally known to them, and to inform him at once if they had suspicions that any attempt was being made to defraud him by inventing fictitious titles or preparing false testimonials.[1] He also called for a list of all persons employed as readers or assistants in the parishes of his diocese from the respective incumbents, so that he might inquire into their certificates of ordination and the testimonials of good conduct, and he forbade any clergyman henceforth to employ any such assistants without having first furnished him with a satisfactory account of their qualifications and character.[2]

In his relations with his clergy Gibson was kind and considerate, though not lacking in firmness. He was noted for his care in the individual examination which he gave to candidates for Orders. Archdeacon Allen declared that 'in the course of his personal examination of candidates for Holy Orders (a custom constantly observed by him, when his health would permit) there appeared so regular a system of divinity that his hearers, with a proper attention, might have been in some measure qualified for teachers in the ministry, even before their admission'.[3] His attitude towards his own clergy was marked by kindness and courtesy, and his government of them 'neither

[1] Gibson, 'Charge of 1724', p. 30.
[2] Boyer, *Political State of Great Britain*, vol. xxxiii, 1727, p. 512.
[3] Allen, 'Charge to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of Middlesex', 1749, London.

rigid nor remiss'. In disposing of preferments he was mindful of the claims of those 'whom he had known long and who had a dependence upon his favour', and frequently refused the requests of great nobles for favours for their friends in order to reward his own faithful clergy.[1] But although he was considerate in his relations with his subordinates, he could be peremptory and stern if any one presumed to take advantage of his friendship. Even his close friend, Dr. Philip Morant, received a severe rebuke, when complaining that he had relinquished £150 a year as chaplain at Amsterdam for the small emoluments of a country living; the Bishop replied by asking two or three plain questions, as to whether the doctor had not resigned that position at his own desire, and whether he had not been indulged by the Bishop in supplying the duty there by a curate until he had been able to go over himself.[2]

In addition to the supervision of the English clergy of the capital, the Bishop of London had the appointment of the ministers of the French churches in the city. In 1730 Gibson had to appoint a preacher in the French chapel at St. James's, and the influence of the Duke of Newcastle and Lord Harrington was exerted in favour of a certain M. Rocheblave. There were several other candidates for the post, however, most of whom, upon inquiry, Gibson found to be superior to their lordships' favourite in respect of preaching ability, and in addition he could not forget 'the account he received some time since of M. Rocheblave's method of living in Paris, which was by no means to his advantage'. Therefore, since he regarded this appointment as 'a trust reposed in him and a trust of a spiritual nature', he wrote to the duke to inform him that he could not accept his nominee.[3] This was characteristic of Gibson's thoroughness and determination.

Another example of his concern for the proper performance of Divine Service is his effort to improve the services in his

[1] Gibson to Morant, 15 May 1745, Correspondence of Dr. Philip Morant, B.M. Add. MS. 37221, No. 178.

[2] Ibid., No. 18.

[3] Gibson to the Duke of Newcastle, 15 July 1730, S. P. Dom., P.R.O., Geo. II, B. 19.

cathedral church. At his first Visitation he set about the task of reforming outstanding abuses. A very common and very offensive practice in the eighteenth century was the use of the naves of cathedrals, even during the time of Divine Service, as a public promenade. At Durham there was a regular thoroughfare across the nave until 1750 and at Norwich until 1748, when Bishop Gooch stopped it. Similarly, the nave of York Minster was a fashionable promenade, whilst during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries 'Paul's Walk' and its frequenters had almost turned the cathedral into a public mart. Although the main features of this latter spectacle had disappeared before the episcopate of Gibson, nevertheless he observed the prevalence of 'an evil custom of great numbers of persons walking and talking in the body of the cathedral church, during the time of Divine Service within the quire, and more especially on the Lord's Day', and ordered the practice to be stopped at once by the rigorous execution of the 18th Canon and the Act of 1 Gul. et Mar. 18 against such practices. Another offensive practice which he insisted must be suppressed was the discouragement of 'persons piously and religiously disposed from attending Divine Service in the quire by the vergers refusing to open the seats until money be given them'. Also the hours of the daily services were altered a little, and provision made for the filling of the preaching turns and the regular attendance of vicars choral and choristers.[1] By these measures Gibson hoped that the cathedral services would be more reverently rendered and attended.

It is impossible to conclude even the most cursory survey of Gibson's episcopate without a mention of two outstanding incidents which attracted great attention at the time of their occurrence, the famous altar-piece at St. Clement Danes, and the tabernacle erected by Orator Henley. The custom of adorning the sanctuary with paintings was not very common in the eighteenth century, and the two instances which are chiefly remembered were both connected with a discreditable scandal. It was a time when party feeling ran very high, and

[1] Gibson, 'Injunctions at the Visitation of the Cathedral Church of St. Paul', 12 May 1724, B.M. Add. MS. 34268, No. 30.

Dr. Welton, Rector of Whitechapel, had created a sensation during the episcopate of Gibson's predecessor, by setting up an altar-piece in representation of the Last Supper, with Bishop White Kennet conspicuous in it as Judas Iscariot. The good Bishop had been a stout defender of the rights of the archbishop in the Convocation controversy, and a vigorous opponent of Dr. Sacheverell, so that he was doubly obnoxious to the High Church party, and the likeness of the countenance of the false disciple to his own was so unmistakable, and the excitement created by its exhibition so great, that the Bishop of London had to order its removal. The same rector was subsequently a source of considerable trouble to Gibson, for he reappeared in the American Colonies as a Non-Juring bishop, seeking to withdraw the colonists from the loyal establishment, and distributing ' divers printed copies of his famous altar-piece ', which were improved by the addition of ' a scrowl with words proceeding out of the mouth of the Bishop of Peterborough to this effect . . . " I am not he that betrayed Christ, though as ready to do it as ever Judas was " '.[1]

The incident at St. Clement Danes was not quite so offensive, though more blasphemous. A picture had been set up, ostensibly representing ' a choir of angells playing in consort ', but thought by some to be a scarcely veiled portrait of the Princess Clementina Sobieski—granddaughter of the famous John Sobieski who had defeated the Turks—the wife of the Old Pretender, and her son, though others saw in it only a representation of St. Cecilia and her harp. Nevertheless, in consequence of its introduction the church became a scene of great excitement every Lord's Day. It was ' thronged with spectators, to the great hindrance of divine worship and annoyance of the parishioners, when those crowds of irreverent persons, which were ever pouring in, came not to join in prayer with the rest of the congregation, but to worship their Popish saint and hug themselves with the conceit of being alone in the secret '. Accordingly, ' when disturbances became so frequent

[1] Jn. Urmston, Maryland, to Archdeacon Philip Stubbs, 29 Sept. 1724; quoted by Stubbs to Gibson, 16 April 1725, Fulham MSS., Box, Pennsylvania and Philadelphia, Item 80.

and the peace of the church was manifestly broken', complaints were presented to the Bishop that the picture was a dishonour and insult both to God, because 'the sons of Belial . . . came there to decypher the dumb libel', and to the King, because it was 'the known resemblance of a person who was the wife of his utter enemy, and pensioner to the whore of Babylon'.[1] Gibson therefore visited the church in person to see the picture and wrote to the churchwardens to require its instant removal. He informed them that he understood that the representation had 'given great offence to many pious and serious people', and he had come to the conclusion that 'there was just occasion for the offence', so that he charged them to take it down straightway. If they neglected to obey that private intimation he would order a citation to be issued out of his Courts 'to show cause why it was set up without the licence of the Ordinary and why it ought not to be taken down'.[2] The picture was therefore removed, but not before it had become the talk of the town; and Hogarth has preserved its memory, by making it the subject of one of his satires, in which he ridicules the unskilful workmanship of the painter, Kent, by adding the information that it was neither 'the Pretender's wife and son' as some weaker brethren imagined, nor 'St. Cecilia as the connoisseurs thought', but 'a choir of angells playing in consort'.[3]

More famous in contemporary London than the altar-piece of St. Clement Danes was the Oratory where the irresponsible Henley held his week-day and Sabbath assemblies. This notorious character, who had been a London clergyman, after quarrelling with Bishop Gibson, determined to set up a new sect and a new chapel, choosing as its site 'a sort of wooden booth, built over the shambles in Newport Market, near Leicester Fields, formerly used for a temporary meeting house of a Calvinistic congregation'.[4] He resolved to shelter himself under the Toleration Act, by taking the oaths of Abjuration

[1] 'A Letter from a Parishioner of St. Clement Danes to the Rt. Rev. Father in God, Edmund Lord Bishop of London', n.d.

[2] Gibson, 'A Letter to the Churchwardens of St. Clement Danes', n.d., Gibson MSS. vii. 15.

[3] Hogarth, 'A Satire on the Altar Piece of St. Clement Danes', B.M. Catalogue of Prints and Drawings, Satires, vol. ii, 1764.

[4] Boyer, *Political State of Great Britain*, vol. xxxii, 1726, pp. 172 seq.

and Allegiance and registering his Oratory in the court of the Archdeacon of Middlesex. Here he lectured every Wednesday upon the profane sciences, and held religious meetings on Sundays at which he used a garbled version of the Liturgy and preached upon theological topics.[1] Every auditor paid one shilling as he entered at the door. By means of diligent advertisement and his inflammatory discourses, Henley soon gained a notoriety in the City,[2] and Gibson remonstrated indignantly with the Government against the ridicule which his parodies were bringing upon religion and the Church. He wrote to Lord Townshend to inform him that he had ascertained that the Oratory was ' neither locked, nor barred, nor bolted, but that there was an inner door, kept shut and guarded by two or three men who hindered everybody from coming in, but such as would give money, or bring tickets as subscribers to the design '. Therefore he doubted if this were allowed by the Toleration Act, and dreaded lest, ' if Henley were able to carry his point in the metropolis of the kingdom ', there should soon be seen ' a Henley in every diocese '. Further, he stated that the Oratory ' was understood to be privately supported by persons who meant ill to the constitution of the Church ', and expressed his opinion that ' when it was understood that the Act of Toleration, instead of being a refuge for tender consciences, was to protect ill-designing men in mangling the Book of Common Prayer and setting up new liturgies and rubrics against it, and turning religious assemblies into theatres and stages ' the Act itself might ' become the abhorrence of the

[1] A critical examination of Henley's character and activities is given by Stoughton, who concludes that he was ' neither profligate nor profane nor a mere buffoon ' though ' ambitious of distinction and not much under the influence of religious principle ' (*History of Religion in England*, vol. v, ' The Church of the Revolution ', pp. 380–2).

[2] Cf. Pope's lines in the *Dunciad*, iii, ll. 199–206 :

> Imbrown'd with native bronze, lo ! Henley stands
> Tuning his voice and balancing his hands
> How fluent nonsense trickles from his tongue,
> How sweet the periods, neither said, nor sung.
>
> Still break the benches, Henley, with thy strain,
> While Sherlock, Hare and Gibson preach in vain,
> Oh ! great Restorer of the good old Stage
> Preacher at once and Zany of the age

clergy and the cry of "the danger of the Church" be revived'.[1]

The question of the legality of Henley's novel liturgy was therefore submitted to the Attorney-General, Sir Philip Yorke, who replied that he thought that 'the case of a minister using a liturgy or prepared form of prayer of his own composing did not differ from that of any other Protestant Dissenting Minister', and that he found nothing in the Act of Uniformity or the Act of Toleration which prohibited the 'mixing some parts of the Book of Common Prayer with that private composition'. On these grounds he was not prepared to advise the Ministry to embark upon 'a prosecution, without any prospect of success, the event of which might rather encourage than restrain the mischief it was intended to suppress'.[2] Despite the indignation of the Bishop, the Ministry would not prosecute Henley, who continued to deliver his discourses unmolested. Gibson, indeed, was in an unenviable situation. On the one hand, he was unable to persuade the Government to interfere, and on the other, he himself was being continually urged by Whiston to inflict spiritual censure upon the offender, a task which he would willingly have undertaken if his decision could have secured any authority to enforce it. The eccentric Professor was pressing him 'to call the presbyters, deacons and the principal of the laity of his diocese together in the way of primitive Christian discipline, and to summon before them, Mr. Henley, the Orator', and he himself offered, since he knew the culprit's 'vile history' so well, 'to come and tell it to the Church according to our Saviour's rule, in order to his vindication of himself, or conviction and exclusion from the Christian Society'. To this request the harassed diocesan could only make reply 'that since no Canon now in force enabled him so to proceed, he could do nothing',[3] an answer which was as unsatisfactory to the recipient as to the sender.

One of the most pleasant features of Gibson's episcopate was

[1] Gibson to Lord Townshend, 8 Sept. 1726, Correspondence of the First Lord Hardwicke, B.M. Add. MS. 36136, No. 63.

[2] Sir P. Yorke to Lord Townshend, 22 Sept. 1726, Correspondence of the First Lord Hardwicke, ibid., No 64.

[3] Whiston, *Memoirs*, i, p. 252.

the esteem which his diocesan clergy entertained towards him. He was Visitor of Sion College and his relations with the clergy there were delightfully cordial and affectionate. From 1726 to 1744 he was present at every annual dinner of the College, except in 1728 and 1743 when he was absent through illness, and he gave a donation of three guineas each time towards the expenses of the feast, until it was announced in 1730 that 'the affairs of the College were in so good a condition' that there was no need to pass round the usual bason, but that henceforth 'the whole charge of the dinner (should be) constantly paid out of the annual income of the said College'.[1] The intimacy which subsisted between the Bishop and the Court of the College was shown by the many instances in which they asked his advice, or made complimentary speeches in his honour. In 1724 the College was offered a trust by the will of a certain Mrs. West, which was declined because 'his lordship discouraged their acceptance of it'. In 1729 the President 'in the name of all the London clergy gave thanks to the Lord Bishop of London for the great services that his lordship had done to the Christian religion, by his publication of two excellent Pastoral Letters against atheism, infidelity and heresie'. A similar motion of thanks was moved at the dinner on the 11th May 1731, both for Gibson's third Pastoral Letter and also for his activities in opposing the Tithe Bill. It was in 1736, however, that the greatest honours were paid to him. On May 7th,

'the Rev. Dr. Samuel Baker, Rector of St. Michael's, Cornhill, and Residentiary of St. Paul's Cathedral came and acquainted the Governors that at his charge and procurement Mr. Vanderbank, Painter, in Hollis Street, Tyburn Road, had drawn the picture of the Rt. Rev^{d}. Edmund, now Lord Bishop of London, w^{ch} the s^{d} Dr. Baker would send hither in a few days and he entreated the Governors to accept it as his present and place it in the College Hall as they in their discretion should think fit.'

[1] E. H. Pearce, *Sion College*, Cambridge, 1913, pp. 205–6; Sion College Register, B, April 1716–78. It is interesting to note that Archbishop Potter was never invited to attend the dinner, though his predecessor had been in 1723, and Archbishop Herring was invited in 1745 and 1747, and again in 1749.

It was decided that the President should make an official return of thanks to the donor at the forthcoming feast day on the 18th inst. Meanwhile the picture arrived on the 13th and was 'set up in the Hall near the picture of the Most Rev^d. Tho: Tenison, late Lord Archbishop of Canterbury'. On the appointed day, therefore, the clergy met to receive the portrait and to express their thanks to the Bishop for his recent boldness in defence of their order. After the convivialities of the dinner were ended, the President moved and the assembly unanimously resolved

'that their humble thanks be given to their most worthy Diocesan, the Rt. Rev^d. the Lord Bishop of London for the several excellent and seasonable defences he had made of the doctrines of the Christian Faith and for the many and great instances he had shown upon all occasions of his care and vigilance in maintaining the constitution of the Church of England in its present establishment and the legal rights of the clergy thereof; and in particular for the steddy and vigorous opposition, which he gave to some attempts lately made upon those rights which manifestly threatened the security of them. It was likewise unanimously agreed . . . that this Resolution be entered by their Registrary into the Register of the said College to remain there as a perpetual memorial of the just sense which the clergy of London had of their singular happiness in being at that time under the protection of so great and able a prelate, who showed upon all occasions so paternal an affection for his own clergy, so great watchfulness and attention to the true interests and welfare of the Church of England, and so much prudence and steddiness in supporting the doctrines, rights and establishment of it.'[1]

It is fitting that the record of Gibson's pastoral activities should terminate upon the note of affection and cordiality depicted by this scene. He had incurred much hostility by his efforts to defend the Church, but he was recompensed in part at least by the loyal appreciation of his own diocesan clergy.

[1] Sion College Register, B, ann. 1736, in loc. cit.; Pearce, *Sion College*, pp. 205–6.

VIII

A PRELATE MILITANT

Defensor Fidei

THE dull uniformity of censure which eighteenth-century Church life has evoked from historians is generally qualified by a word of commendation for the vigorous polemic which Anglican divines carried on against the Deists. The large number of clergy of every degree of eminence, whether scholastic or ecclesiastical, who threw themselves into the fray was a welcome evidence that the seventeenth-century spirit of militancy was not entirely dead, but that some memories of the heroic age still survived. The attack which the Church had now to meet, however, came from an entirely different quarter. It was no longer the religious enthusiasm of the Commonwealth, nor the enervating immorality of Charles II which was to be feared, but the sceptical rationalism of a school of thinkers who questioned the very basis of revealed religion ; and the victory which the dialectic of orthodox divines was able to win was the most important event of Church history since the Reformation. The century of storm and stress which had elapsed since the settlement of Elizabeth had left little time for the elaboration of its implicit principles. The pressure of external events had compelled it to defend itself against the attempt to set up Independency, and the treacherous plot to betray it again to the enemy from which it had succeeded in making escape ; and men had not had leisure yet to consider the inner significance of the conflict. But this duty could not be long evaded, and so soon as a period of internal peace afforded an opportunity of quiet reflection the question must arise, ' By what authority do ye these things ? ' and press insistently for an answer. The National Church had to face the task of establishing some new authority to take the place of that which it had rejected, and its recent experiences had demonstrated the failure of the two experiments which had

been tried. 'Church authority was essayed by the Laudian divines but was soon found untenable, for on that footing it was found impossible to justify the Reformation and the breach with Rome. The Spirit then came into favour along with Independency. But it was still more quickly discovered that on such a basis only discord and disunion could be reared.'[1]

With the Revolution of 1688, internal equilibrium was restored and England had experienced the last of her political revolutions. The time was opportune for the consideration of the problem, and influential forces were at work in many different spheres of activity which would affect considerably the nature of the solution. The vigorous offensive launched by the movement of the Counter-Reformation had compelled Protestantism to fight for its existence and for this purpose to make use of the weapons nearest to hand. The doctrine of the authority of the Church had been countered by the hastily conceived appeal to the single authority of Scripture. But the inability of the sects to agree in their interpretations of it had demonstrated the disadvantages of this position. In England the air was filled with the clamorous shouts of the numerous and antagonistic groups which were proclaiming the inerrancy of their own particular exegesis of Holy Writ. It was evident that the lack of a controlling principle of authority could be the parent of nothing but confusion. The sense of the scandal and unseemliness of these squabbles was immeasurably intensified in men's minds by the new conception of the majesty and grandeur of natural law, which the recent discoveries in natural science had developed. With the realization that the patrimony of Christendom was but a small portion of the inhabited globe, and that the very earth itself sunk into insignificance amid the myriad suns of stellar space, there came a new revelation, impressive and humiliating, of the power and dignity of the divine ruler. 'The universe which had been potentially infinite, was becoming actually infinite.'[2] The same conception of the supremacy of law had secured a

[1] Mark Pattison, in *Essays and Reviews*, London, 8th ed., 1861, p. 328.
[2] Leslie Stephen, *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. i, p. 83 (London, 1902).

signal triumph in the practical world of politics. The expulsion of the Stuart line had established once for all the principle that the King was subject, not superior, to the law; and as the doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings had been part of a theological system, its rejection exercised an indirect influence upon the conception of the Deity also. The effect of this discovery of new knowledge was to dethrone for ever the notion of an arbitrary and capricious God, whose will was subject to no restraints, and whose actions were not patient of rational understanding. The new learning was powerfully impressed by the universal testimony which the heavens bore to the order and majesty of God's creation. The Creator was evidently the author not of confusion, but of law; and this law was so written that all nations could understand it. There was also an intimate correspondence between the external revelation in Nature and the inward witness of the human reason. The philosopher passed from the contemplation of the heavens to the law written upon the heart, which again was universal and intelligible to all men. In contrast to this natural harmony was the spectacle of warring religious sects, claiming to have a special revelation from God, and each asserting that its own interpretation thereof was exclusively true.[1] It was hard to resist the conclusion that either these babblers had lost the true key to the understanding of their Scriptures, or that these Scriptures themselves were corrupt and imperfect. The Deistic movement represented the attempt to reconcile the apparent contradictions between the revelation of God in Nature, and in Christianity as interpreted by the Church's theologians. There are two principles which are characteristic of all the Deistic writers: first, there was a universal agreement that the final authority and court of appeal must be not the letter of Scripture, but the human reason. 'The appeal from the frantic discord of enthusiasts to reason must needs be, not to an arbitrary or particular reason in each man, but to a common sense, a natural discern-

[1] Gibson speaks of the students of Natural Science thus: 'The men of science (a conceited generation) are the greatest sticklers against revealed religion and have been very open in their attacks upon it.' Gibson to Berkeley, 9 July 1735, Fraser, *Works of Berkeley*, iv, p. 238.

ment, a reason of universal obligation.'[1] Secondly, the judgement of common reason upon the Scriptures must be brought into harmony with the witness which it had discovered in the realm of Nature, and in the law within the heart. On these two points hang all the discussion and controversy.

The first adumbration of the new principles is to be found in the writings of Lord Herbert of Cherbury, who had set forth so early as 1624, in his *De Veritate*, 'five fundamental propositions of natural religion'; these affirm the existence of God, the duty of worshipping Him, the importance of piety and virtue as the chief parts of this duty, the propriety of repentance and the existence of a future state of rewards and punishments.[2] All these theses the Deists believed to be provable by reason alone. But Lord Herbert was born a generation before his time, and the real originator of the controversy was the famous philosopher John Locke. It is hardly possible to exaggerate his influence, or to determine whether it was felt more powerfully in the camp of the orthodox or that of their assailants. The fact that both sides contended so eagerly for the right of claiming his support demonstrates the authority which his name commanded. The title of his treatise, 'The Reasonableness of Christianity', may be said to have been the solitary thesis of Christian theology in England for the great part of a century.[3] Since his writings were quoted as much by the defenders of the faith as by their opponents, it will be well to pass to a consideration of the main tendencies of the Deistic writings in order to discover wherein they differed from him. The trumpet call to battle was sounded in 1696 by the publication of John Toland's *Christianity not Mysterious*, which at once startled the ecclesiastical world into unwonted activity, and virtually began the controversy His main thesis was that, as it was by reason that the Bible must be interpreted, so it could contain nothing which was not comprehensible by reason. A mystery was merely something which was before not understood, but has now been made clear. It is a justifiable

[1] Mark Pattison, *Essays and Reviews*, 8th ed., 1861, p. 291.
[2] Leslie Stephen, *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, i, p. 84.
[3] Mark Pattison, *Essays and Reviews*, p. 258.

inference from this position that God had revealed Himself in and through the human reason. To this theologians of all shades of opinion would agree. The real question was whether the revelation of God in Nature, and in the heart of man, as apprehended by reason, was sufficient? Could man attain sufficient assurance from the contemplation of natural law and from the following out of his natural impulses to virtue, to worship God and live righteously? Or was not the additional revelation in Christianity necessary, even if only in the humble capacity of policeman to enforce the practice of virtue by establishing a conviction of immortality through the resurrection of Christ, and of the consequent infliction of eternal punishment and bestowal of rewards? At this point the orthodox and the Deists parted company.[1] The developed opinion of the latter found its fullest expression in Tindal's *Christianity as Old as the Creation*, published in 1730, in which the author declares roundly that 'the religion of nature is absolutely perfect; Revelation can neither add to nor take away from its perfection'. According to his argument, God must have given men from the first an adequate knowledge of Himself and of those elemental truths by obedience to which they might become acceptable to Him. If 'e Law of Nature is perfect, it can receive no additions; if it is not, 'does it not argue want of wisdom in the Legislator in first enacting such an imperfect law and then letting it continue imperfect from age to age, and at last thinking to make it absolutely perfect by adding some merely positive and arbitrary precepts?' Tindal solved the problem of the contradictions between natural and revealed religion, by the simple expedient of identifying Christianity with the law of nature. 'God never intended mankind should be without a religion, or could ordain an imperfect religion; there must have been from the beginning a religion most perfect, which mankind at all times were capable of knowing; Christianity is this perfect, original religion.' If the creeds and

[1] Cf. an interesting Note on 'Deism of the Eighteenth Century' in Note A of *Miracle and its Philosophical Presuppositions* (pp. 96–7), by F. R. Tennant: Cambridge, 1925, Dr. Tennant calls Deism 'the beginning of modernity in English theology.'

theologies of the churches did not agree with this simple religion, so much the worse for them, for their points of difference were merely corrupt declensions from the pure original, or spurious additions thereto.

The religious system elaborated by Tindal is the theological parallel to the political philosophy of Rousseau. The noble savage of the latter, whose original capacity for perfect citizenship has been corrupted by the retrogressive influence of civilization, is transformed into the simple believer in natural religion, whose spiritual understanding has been wellnigh extinguished by the immoral inventions which a self-seeking priesthood have imposed upon the pure original faith. The objections which the orthodox writers urged against this theory were twofold. They pointed out that the Law of Nature was neither so perfect, so clear, nor so universal as was easily believed. 'There never was a time when mankind had realized or established an actual system of natural religion, but it lies always potentially in his reason. It held the same place as the social contract in political history. The "original contract" had never had historical existence, but it was a hypothesis necessary to explain the existing fact of society.'[1] Also they urged the positive testimony of the Bible with its supernatural events and its record of an irruption of forces from another sphere into the world. This position had, in fact, been taken up in substance by Locke himself in his famous treatise on *The Reasonableness of Christianity* of 1695. He had there advanced the thesis 'that Christianity might be reduced to one single tenet, that Christ was the Messiah, whose advent was foretold by the prophets, and the truth of whose divine mission had been attested by miracles'.[2] Having admitted the historicity of miracles and the wonder of the Old Testament

[1] Mark Pattison, in *Essays and Reviews*, London, 1861, 8th ed., p. 272.

[2] Cf. Locke, *The Reasonableness of Christianity as delivered in the Scriptures* (Locke's *Works*, in 10 volumes, 1812, London, vol. vii): 'It is plain that believing in the Son is the believing that Jesus was the Messiah; giving credit to the miracles he did and the profession he made of himself,' p. 17. Locke mentions three proofs (pp. 32 seq.): 'by miracles'; 'by phrases and circumlocutions that did signify or intimate his coming, though not in direct words pointing out the person'; and 'by plain and direct words, declaring out the doctrine of the Messiah, speaking out that Jesus was he'.

predictions of Christ, he had severed himself from the Deists, who would be content only with internal evidence drawn from the fitness of things or the testimony of reason, and the Christian apologists quickly proceeded to read into Locke's acknowledgement of Christ as Messiah the entire Nicene theology of the Church.

The ground of the attack was therefore shifted, and the enemy proceeded to consider the credibility of the Biblical records. Collins published in 1724 his book entitled *A Discourse upon the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion*, in which he took up the argument from prophecy. 'To his mind it was a clear case that the prophecies which were supposed to refer to Christ had a relation only to contemporary events, that none of them had been literally fulfilled, that it was only by the use of the allegorical method of interpretation that any allusion could be found in them to the being whom the Christians claimed as Messiah.' [1] The other line of defence from the evidence of miracles was attacked next by the eccentric and unhappy Woolston in his *Six Discourses on the Miracles*. He endeavoured to dispose of their historical character by a fanciful process of allegorizing and of mystical interpretation, combined with a peculiarly blasphemous and scurrilous method of treating the subject.

It was evident that the assault of the infidels had penetrated into the very citadel of faith when the authenticity of the Scriptures was being openly called in question, and the whole host of ecclesiastics armed themselves for the fray. The number of clergy of all degrees of eminence and erudition who contributed their folios or octavos, as the case might be, is truly remarkable. The leading names are well known, Bentley, Berkeley, Clarke, Butler, Waterland, and Warburton; as also are those of Sherlock, Conybeare, and Smallbroke, and to these were added a host of the smaller fry. The record of their vigorous polemic and final victory is too well known for its history to be recapitulated here; it is, furthermore, irrelevant to the present issue. Attention must be turned to the part which Bishop Gibson played in this stirring scene.

[1] A. V. G. Allen, *The Continuity of Christian Thought*, Boston, 1912, i, p. 354.

It was impossible that he should stand aloof from the contest. The Bishop of London was bound to become involved in the fracas, even if the occupant of the see had been a much less energetic prelate than 'Dr. Codex'. To him, however, abstention was inconceivable. His diocese was 'the centre of the conspiracy which was being hatched to overthrow the Christian revelation', and from it the pernicious ideas were transmitted to all parts of the kingdom. There was a particular obligation upon him, therefore, to do his utmost 'to banish and drive away' these erroneous doctrines. Unfortunately he was not especially fitted for the position of *defensor fidei*, at any rate when he was restricted to the use of immaterial weapons. 'Bishop Gibson's life and character', wrote an historian of English religious thought, 'belong more to the history of the Church than to the history of ideas.'[1] It is probable that he was himself conscious of this limitation, for it is important to note that he never attempted to address any reply to the actual authors of the deistical books. He confined his activities to the production of pastoral letters to the people of his diocese, in which he did not attempt to redeem the Deists from their errors so much as to prevent the simple layman from relaxing his grasp of the faith. In his first Pastoral Letter of 1728 he observed that the majority of writings which had been issued against the infidels were 'too large and too learned to be examined by the generality of the people, and consisted of such a chain of reasoning as persons of common capacity could not easily follow and comprehend', and therefore he had taken upon himself the humbler office of drawing up 'some few rules, which were very short and easy and which, being frequently perused and duly attended to, might be a means under the blessing of God, to preserve sincere and unprejudiced Christians from those dangerous infections'.[2] Apart from this explicit declaration, it is difficult to understand the contents of the first letter, for it consists almost entirely of a series of practical precepts designed to prevent the people from engaging in

[1] Hunt, *Religious Thought in England*, London, 1871, vol. iii, p. 80.

[2] Gibson, 'The Bishop of London's Pastoral Letter to the People of his diocese: particularly of those great cities of London and Westminster, occasioned by some late writings in favour of infidelity', London, 1728, p. 4.

speculation concerning the foundations of their faith. They are exhorted to cultivate a sincere desire to know and to do the will of God, to maintain the regular practices of devotion, that is to be constant in their attendance at church and in reading the Scriptures, to have a proper reverence for the Church and its ministers, to regard irreverent treatment of the Bible as an infallible sign of ' a depraved mind ', to be watchful against accepting as true the emphatic assertions of those who affect to doubt the truth of Christianity, for ' there are monsters in mind as well as in body ', and, above all, to examine the moral character of those who attempt to seduce them, inquiring first if their lives were good, before considering their doctrine. Only a few brief paragraphs are devoted to the exposition of ' the more direct and plain proofs of the truth of Christianity ', such as the significance of types in the Old Testament (especially the Paschal Lamb), the testimony of prophecies, the overwhelming evidence of miracles—which are in their nature ' a most sure plain and easy proof, which the meanest capacities were capable of apprehending and entring into '—the predictions of Christ Himself concerning His own death and the destruction of Jerusalem, and ' the speedy and wonderful propagation of the Gospel ', which bore in itself ' the clearest evidence of a Divine Power ' ; and all this was supplemented by a severe admonition against the presumption and folly of people of mean capacities attempting to understand all the nice and learned details of Biblical scholarship.[1] It was not until the attack had been made against the Christian revelation as a whole by Tindal, and against the Bible as its record by Collins and Woolston, that Gibson grappled with the real problems raised by them, in his second and third Pastoral Letters.

In his general position and attitude Gibson would doubtless have claimed to be a liberal theologian. His second Letter opened with the bold declaration that ' it is universally acknowledged that revelation itself is to stand or fall by the test of reason, or, in other words, according as reason finds the evidences of its coming from God to be or not to be sufficient and conclusive, and the letter of it to contradict or not to

[1] Gibson, ' (First) Pastoral Letter ', London, 1728.

contradict the natural notions which reason gives us of the being and attributes of God '.[1] There could be no more striking testimony to the influence of rationalism in English theology in the eighteenth century, nor to the authority of Locke, through whose writings it was chiefly mediated, than the open confession of its principles by so orthodox a prelate as Bishop Gibson. After this courageous exordium, however, he proceeded to expound his thesis that the natural reason is impotent without revelation.

' To make this out it was necessary to show that the knowledge with which reason could supply us was inadequate to be the guide of life, yet reason must not be too much depressed, inasmuch as it was needed for the proof of Christianity. On the one hand the moral state of the heathen world prior to the preaching of Christianity, and of pagan and savage tribes in Africa and America now, the superstitions of the most civilized nations of antiquity, the intellectual follies of the wisest philosophers, are exhibited in great detail.' [2]

It is precisely this line of argument which Gibson adopted and developed at length. In company with Locke, he maintained that the mass of mankind could neither understand the arguments of the learned, nor discriminate between their contradictory conclusions ; they must either ' remain irrecoverably in a state of ignorance and corruption or else there must be some divine revelation to help them out of it '. The natural sinfulness of man demanded a supernatural redemption. Therefore the only important task was to inquire if the Christian revelation possessed evident proofs of its divine foundation. That the Old Testament prophecies of the coming Messiah and the actual miracles of Christ Himself supplied a convincing answer he could not doubt. These proofs were of compelling force to the reason, bringing it to the acceptance of revelation. ' But here reason stops ; not as set aside by revelation, but as taking revelation for its guide and not

[1] Gibson, ' The Bishop of London's Second Pastoral Letter to the People of his diocese, occasioned by some late writings, in which it is asserted " that Reason is a sufficient guide in matters of Religion without the help of Revelation " ', London, 1730, p. 4.

[2] Mark Pattison, in *Essays and Reviews*, 1861, p. 271.

thinking itself at liberty to call in question the wisdom and expedience of any part, after it is satisfied that the whole comes from God.'[1] It was 'extreme vanity and presumption' on the part of Deists to ask, 'for what reason God did not make it sooner and why not to all mankind at once?' The old notion of an imperious, arbitrary Deity died hard; and Gibson argued that 'surely God is at liberty to dispense extraordinary favours at what times and in what measures, and to what nations and persons He thinks fit.'

Most Christian apologists were content to adopt the view of revelation as a necessary police force to maintain order and discipline in the world. They contrasted the imperfect morality of the heathen teachers, and the corruption of the general mass of mankind, with the high ethical precepts of Christ, the spiritual worship which He introduced, and, above all, with the new authority which He gave to the moral law by His demonstration of immortality and of future rewards and punishments. Their generation was a strictly practical and common-sense one. Religion was essential to the everyday working of society; its value lay in the sanctions which it gave to morality. The doctrine of Hell in its unexpurgated ferocity was, to Gibson, 'that most powerful motive to duty and obedience, the full assurance of rewards and punishments in another life, without which . . . it was impossible that mankind, in this corruptible state, should be restrained from excess and violence'.[2] Beyond this, the more liberal Churchmen did not go. 'It was indeed hinted by some that such traditional tenets as Original Sin, the Atonement and the Sacraments still held a place in revelation; but it was done in the way of apology as if there might be points of view where they did not appear as altogether irrational or useless.'[3] Bishop Gibson had no use for such half-hearted defences. He protested indignantly against the tendency to 'believe, not the doctrines because contained in the Scriptures, but the Scripture on account of the doctrines', and to admit only such things in the Bible as 'tend to the honour of God and

[1] Gibson, 'Second Pastoral Letter', 1730, p. 4.
[2] Gibson, 'First Pastoral Letter', p. 10.
[3] Allen, *The Continuity of Christian Thought*, p. 350.

the good of men'. If the revelation bore outward signs of divine authority, every portion must be accepted.

It was evident that the soundness of his argument depended upon the truth and authority of the New Testament Scriptures, and accordingly his third Pastoral Letter was devoted to a consideration of the evidences for their authenticity. Tindal had already commended the Law of Nature because it did not depend 'on the skill or honesty of weak and designing transcribers (not to mention translators)', and now many of the Deists were suggesting that even the original authors might have been 'falsifiers, dupes or impostors'. This line of argument drove the apologists into a wearisome defensive campaign which is set down under the description of that Old Bailey theology, in which, to use Johnson's illustration, 'the Apostles are tried once a week for the capital crime of forgery'.[1] Gibson therefore turned his attention to the study of evidences. He maintained that the Gospels were written by the authors whose names they bear, and that these men were free from all suspicion of forgery, being 'enabled by all helps natural and supernatural'. So also the Pauline Epistles were the work of one 'to whom the whole Gospel had been immediately revealed from heaven'.[2] Upon such authority it was impossible not to accept every item of the teaching they contained; for, on the one hand, the variations of different manuscripts were only such as were common to all ancient histories, and on the other, the assent to the Messiahship of Jesus, was 'in effect the acknowledgement that Jesus was the Son of God and the baptism received in virtue of that assent an embracing of the doctrine of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost'.[3] Thus the verity of the Christian revelation was established by a convincing body of evidence, both external and internal.

The proof indeed was so compelling that Gibson could not allow that his opponents were sincere in rejecting it. He was driven to the conclusion that some moral obliquity darkened their understanding.

[1] Mark Pattison, in *Essays and Reviews*, p. 260.
[2] Gibson, 'Third Pastoral Letter', London, 1731, p. 12.
[3] Ibid., p. 78.

'When we consider the strength and clearness of the evidences of Christianity', he wrote, 'with the advantages and excellencies of the Gospel institution, and the strict restraints it lays upon excess and uncleanness of all kinds, we cannot but see that it requires the greatest degree of charity not to ascribe their infidelity to anything but the love of vice or the love of contradiction.' [1]

It is to be wished that the Christian apologists had attained this charity. The suggestion of moral imperfections was an odious one. 'As levelled against an individual, this is a poor controversial shift. Many of the Deists were men of worth and probity; of none of them is anything known which would make them worse men than the average of their class in life.' [2] In this respect, as also in the good qualities of his arguments, Gibson was only representative of the thought and standard of his age. He had not professed to contribute anything original to the discussion. 'His Pastoral letters were meant for the general public and were an effort to make popular the chief arguments that had been urged by other writers in defence of the Christian evidences.' [3] But if he urged the same things against the Deists as their other opponents had done, it must be granted that he said them as well as they had been said by others'.[4] Also the success of his efforts was largely due to the fact that he had addressed himself to the common man. For the difficulties with which Deism did honestly grapple sprang not from the speculative reason of the few but the natural conscience of the many. 'At the debate between the Deists and the Christian apologists the public was umpire'; and that because the general citizen realized that the points under discussion were vital to the practice of his own religion. Because Gibson appealed to the people, therefore his writings became popular.

It is undeniable that his Pastoral Letters exercised a considerable influence in his own day, and the fact demands an explanation. It is probable, indeed, that the laudatory epistles which his brother prelates sent to him may be put aside

[1] Gibson, 'Second Pastoral Letter', p. 75.
[2] Mark Pattison, in *Essays and Reviews*, p. 327.
[3] Hunt, *Religious Thought in England*, iii, p. 80.
[4] Ibid. ii, p. 462.

as the conventional courtesies of the Bench. But there are many striking testimonies of the wide circulation of his pamphlets. No fewer than 30,000 copies of the first Pastoral Letter were printed by the S.P.C.K., 27,000 of the second, and 17,000 of the third, whilst they were afterwards republished in one volume, of which 3,000 copies were struck off.[1] They were translated into French for the edification of the refugees in England, and in that form found their way not only into France but into Virginia at least of the American colonies.[2] Gibson himself sent a copy to every parish of his own diocese, the Bishop of Chester did likewise in his county, and a separate edition was printed in Dublin for circulation in the Irish Church.[3] Through the vigilance of Gibson also they were advertised and distributed in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, South Carolina, and the Barbadoes. Many public bodies and private individuals sent messages of thanks and commendation to the author. Lord Townshend thought them to be written 'with so much learning, judgement and good sense' that they could not 'fail of having a great and good effect even in that degenerate age'.[4] The Bishop's friends assured him that they were received with approbation in both the Universities. The clergy at Sion College passed a resolution of thanks and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel likewise sent a formal message of appreciation.[5] Gibson even drew a word of praise from the mouth of his enemies. Count Albert de Passaran, himself a prominent Freethinker, whom the Bishop had been anxious to prosecute, expressed his conviction, to which some weight must be attached, that the Pastoral Letters 'had proved far more detrimental to the infidels . . . than ever were those many cartloads of apologies, vindications, justifications, demonstrations, etc., which had been hitherto written, printed and published in the defence and behalf of Christianity'.[6]

[1] Gibson MSS. iii. 15b.

[2] Mr. Commissary Blair (Virginia) to Bishop Gibson, 11 Aug. 1734, Fulham MSS., Box, Virginia, i.

[3] Gibson MSS. iii. 6, 9, 12.

[4] Townshend to Gibson, ibid. 48.

[5] S. P. G. resolution, 21st May 1731, ibid. 44.

[6] Passaran, 'A History of the Priesthood, Ancient and Modern', London, 1737, p. 60; Bp. Gibson Pamphlets, 45 B. 17, No. 3, Sion College. The

They became so popular and well known as to be a common subject of wit and ridicule by the scribblers. The satirists could not resist the temptation to represent them as a further evidence of the self-esteem and insatiable ambition of ' proud Codex '.

> There 's L[ondon]'s letter writ to show
> Some part of Scripture he does know
> ' The age is wicked,' he does cry,
> ' Despising Church authority,
> Therefore in print I will be pert
> And all my faculties exert.' [1]

' The Craftsman ' parodied their form and style by writing a series of ' Pastoral Letters to the People of England, occasioned by some late writings in favour of wicked ministers, corruption and arbitrary power ', intended to tread in Gibson's steps and ' extend his excellent rules and arguments to the emolument of his countrymen in a civil capacity '.[2] Even Hogarth in his caricature, ' A Harlot's Progress ', which depicted a scene in the harlot's bedroom, where her breakfast was being prepared, placed in the foreground a table bearing a knife, cup and saucer, bread, &c., on which was also ' a piece of paper used to hold butter though it was part of a " Pastoral Letter to . . . " ', the letter which was thus contumeliously treated being supposed to be one of Gibson's pamphlets.[3] It is evident that the Bishop's tracts were both well known and serviceable to the cause he was defending. But his enthusiasm was not limited to the dissemination of his own writings. He was always ready to publish the works of others and to reward those of his clergy who were zealous to uphold the faith. He

writer pays a notable tribute to Gibson's character : ' For in spite of malicious calumniators, who paint him as a man insufferably proud, arrogant, haughty, ravenous and no less vindictive than the Grand Inquisitor of God, spite of this heap of detraction, I say, he has on many occasions given very sensible proofs of his ardent zeal for the faith ' (p. 60). Passaran thinks Gibson has demonstrated it ' not impossible for a man to be both a Christian and a bishop '.

[1] ' The Bishop or No Bishop : or the Disappointed Doctor ', London, n.d., Bp. Gibson Pamphlets, xv. 17, Sion College.

[2] *The Country Journal*, or *The Craftsman*, Saturday, 16th Nov. 1728.

[3] B.M. Catalogue of Prints and Drawings, Div. I, Satires, vol. iii pt. i, No. 2061.

collected and republished several essays of Addison,[1] and encouraged Waterland, 'the most learned of contemporary divines',[2] to continue his apologetic writings, taking him under his own protection and making him successively Vicar of Twickenham and Archdeacon of Middlesex.[3] Dr. Philip Morant first came to his notice by presenting to him a manuscript 'Answer to the First Part of the Discourse of the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion, in a letter to a Friend', and afterwards passed rapidly through a series of preferments, and became a trusted friend of the Bishop. Mr. Leonard Twells, the vicar of St. Mary's, Marlborough, Wilts., also wrote a pamphlet in defence of Gibson's Pastorals and was rewarded by a prebend of St. Paul's and the rectories of St. Matthew's, Friday Street, and St. Peter's, Cheapside, because 'his pen was engaged in the Bishop's defence'.[4]

In addition to these typical examples of the Bishop of London's determination to make his diocese a stronghold of defence against the attacks of the enemy, it must be noticed that he devoted the whole of his Visitation Charge of 1731 to a consideration of the methods by which the parish clergy might best help to combat Deism. First he gave a fair and reasonable sketch of the chief arguments which were urged against the Christian revelation, and then passed to point out practical remedies. The clergy should strive to lift their religion above the assaults of all speculative theorists by demonstrating its power to reform their lives; a good life would be the best defence of Christianity. They should exercise particular care in the catechising of the young and in supporting charity schools, so that 'good impressions' might be made upon the children's minds at an early age. In opposition to the attempt to treat the Christian scheme as if it were merely a collection of moral precepts, they should preach regular and frequent sermons upon its doctrinal aspects, and should be diligent

[1] Allen, 'Charge to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of Middlesex,' 1749, p. 6.
[2] Stephen, *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, i, p. 86.
[3] Orders, Licences, Institutions, and Collations in the time of the Rt. Rev. Edmund Gibson, Lord Bishop of London, Box, History of the Bishops of London, Fulham MSS.
[4] Ballard MSS. xxviii. 18–19.

students of the Scriptures. Nor should they be 'affrighted and discouraged by the boasts of the enemy upon their progress in the work of infidelity and the numbers of proselytes they gained', but, remembering that the ranks of the freethinkers would always be swelled by the large host of free-livers, devote themselves to maintaining the allegiance of the serious and virtuous members of their flock. Above all, since a determined attack was being made upon the National Establishment of Religion, as 'an usurpation upon the natural rights and liberties of mankind and an useless burden laid upon the people', and upon the clergy as 'an order of men useless and unnecessary', who were also 'seditious, uneasy and dangerous to the civil Government', it behoved them by the diligence of their pastoral labours to prove their value to the people, and by their steadfast loyalty to the Protestant Succession their affection for the Administration.[1] From these examples it is evident that although Gibson did not produce an immortal work in defence of the Christian religion against the Deists, nevertheless by his practical ability and determination, he was a powerful champion of the cause of the Church. Occasionally, indeed, his zeal outran discretion and was gravely misdirected. Believing the suppression of deistic literature to be a valuable service to orthodoxy, he used his great influence to prevent infidel pamphlets from being issued to the public, and, happening to come into possession of an unpublished manuscript of Tindal after the author's death, 'thought the best way to answer it was to destroy it', an offence for which posterity will hardly forgive him.[2]

Indeed, Gibson was more anxious to exercise coercive powers against the Deists, than to trust in the unaided strength of reason and argument, and it must be acknowledged that they laid themselves open to persecution by the fury and invective of their attacks upon the clergy. It was essential to their success that they should shake the credit of the Church and its

[1] Gibson, 'Charge to the Clergy of his diocese in the Visitation begun in the Cathedral Church of St. Paul on May 28th 1730, concerning the proper methods of opposing and defeating the present attempts of Infidels against the Christian Religion', London, 1731.

[2] Hunt, *Religious Thought in England*, ii, p. 462.

ministry with the people and too often they chose to attempt this by fierce denunciation and calumny, as well as by treating the Scriptures with blasphemous ridicule. Nor can it be denied that they enjoyed a remarkable degree of liberty on the whole. Count Passaran, who had personal experience of the repressive measures taken in other countries against freedom of speech and thought, confessed that England in this respect and in this century was remarkable for its tolerance.

'It is entirely owing to the enterprising genii of this age,' he wrote, addressing the English Deists, 'that we have seen religion besieged openly from every quarter; its mysteries are turned into ridicule by the ingenious Mr. Toland; its clergy are become contemptible to many since they have read that smart piece, "The Independent Whig"; which having effectually cleared the way and given assault to religious outworks, its very foundations were afterwards violently shaken by the celebrated performances of Mr. Collins; and finally, down tumbled the whole edifice by means of those inimitable masterpieces of Mr. Woolston.'[1]

Despite this vigorous polemic, its authors enjoyed a general immunity from persecution. The laws against blasphemy were still in force, and the threat of their execution hung over the heads of the Deists. But though the infidel was liable to persecution in theory, he was seldom persecuted in practice. Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees*, indeed, was presented as a nuisance by the grand jury of Middlesex in 1723, as were Bolingbroke's collected *Works* in 1752 and Toland's *Christianity not Mysterious* in 1699. Toland had to fly from Dublin and Collins to go out of the way to Holland, for fear of further consequences. The only prosecution for religious libel was that of Woolston, in 2 George II, in which the defendant, who was not of sound mind, 'provoked and even compelled the law officers of the Crown to proceed against him, though they were very reluctant to do so.'[2] Woolston indeed died in prison, and at a later period Annet was pilloried and imprisoned for equally insulting language. But these were exceptional cases. 'As a

[1] Passaran, 'A History of the Priesthood, Ancient and Modern', p. 57, London, 1737, Bp. Gibson Pamphlets, 45 B. 17, No. 3, Sion College.

[2] Mark Pattison, in *Essays and Reviews*, p. 312.

rule the Deists escaped without injury; their creed exposed them to much obloquy, but little danger; and they were forced, not to conceal their opinions, but to cover them with a veil of decent ambiguity.'[1] The tolerant attitude of the Whig Administration and its extreme reluctance to suppress free thought by coercion are among the most creditable features of Walpole's policy.

The credit for this leniency, however, is not due to the influence of Bishop Gibson. He was continually uttering protests against the unprecedented licence allowed to scribblers, and urging the Ministry to institute prosecutions. His letters are full of indignant remonstrances that 'it now seemed to be an established maxim among us that any one was at full liberty to say and write what he pleased against religion'.[2] His own position was expressed in a little brochure which he wrote concerning 'the Rights of Civil Power in matters of Religion'. It was an attempt so to enlist the sword of the temporal Power in defence of religion that the Church might enjoy the benefits, without incurring the odium, of persecuting infidels. He was firmly persuaded that 'no Government is wisely contrived, in which religion is not considered as one branch of the institution', a thesis which was supported not only by the examples of history, but by the practical consideration of the necessity of religion and its supernatural sanctions to preserve human virtue and behaviour. From this it followed that 'the supreme Legislative Powers in every country had a right . . . to establish and encourage that religion which they believed to be true, and to appoint such forms of worship as were judged . . . to be agreeable to it'. Thus far Gibson had said nothing which had not been the approved opinion of Archbishop Tillotson, and which was not acceptable to the majority of his fellow-countrymen. For despite the attacks of the Deists upon the principle of a National Church, 'there was no feeling against the Church Establishment, nor was non-conformity as a theory ever less in favour.'

Gibson had now to steer a middle course between the Scylla

[1] Stephen, *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, i, p. 89.
[2] Gibson to Charles Delafaye, 4 Nov. 1732, S. P. Dom. Geo. II, B. 28.

of persecution and the Charybdis of unfettered licence. He was convinced that the civil power, having once established a national religion, was compelled ' to preserve it, as such, from publick insult, abuse and contempt ', so long as its ministers ' maintained the truth of their religion by reason and argument, and by fairly considering the objections raised against it ', that is, did not attempt to establish a spiritual tyranny. If this were true, then all attacks upon it which were calculated to ' take off the reverence and veneration ' which it possessed in the minds of the people, by putting it to open ridicule, were subversive of the foundations of human conduct and civil obedience, and demanded rigorous corrective measures. This doctrine, however, looked very much like persecution for conscience' sake, and Gibson laboured ingeniously to prove that it was not so. He affirmed that to call upon every man ' to make an open declaration of his own private opinions in religion ' or to compel him ' to join in a worship that he did not in his conscience approve ' would be an act of persecution ; but the Toleration Act had provided for the scruples of all persons of real piety. On the contrary, since ' scurrility and raillery had no tendency to convince the judgement, but on the contrary to blind and mislead it by making things ridiculous, and ' since it was evidently the interest of civil government that religion should not be made ridiculous ', therefore all penalties inflicted to restrain these practices ' were not persecutions on account of religion but the just and necessary supports of a civil establishment '. This casuistry was carried one step further by the assertion that any person ' who set himself openly to reproach and expose to scorn and contempt the religion of a country ' without ' bringing sufficient testimonies of a commission from God ', and was punished by the civil magistrate, must ' submit patiently to the punishment inflicted on him, and expect a reward from God in the next world' according to the goodness of his cause and the sincerity of his heart '.[1] With a theory of persecution so ingeniously devised, it is to be feared that Gibson would have made short work of

[1] Gibson, ' Positions, touching the Rights of ye Civil Power in Matters of Religion ', Gibson MSS. vii. 20.

the Deists if the power had been granted to him. He would have set forth a very short and easy way with infidels. For he could not conceive that they were animated by motives of sincerity. With such a strong and compelling body of evidence in favour of the Christian revelation, he could not believe that any who still persisted in infidelity could have any other intention than to corrupt the public morals. Accordingly, he was greatly disgusted by the refusal of the Ministry to take repressive measures.

A particular example of the persistent pressure which he put upon them was seen in the case of Count Albert de Passaran. This unfortunate person was certainly a Deist, who contributed divers small pamphlets to its voluminous literature without appearing to be either particularly dangerous or able. But he had found the atmosphere of Italy too oppressive and had, therefore, come over to the freer air of England. Gibson thought it a monstrous thing that a man of such pernicious principles, who had been expelled from one country, should find a safe asylum in England and continue to publish infidel tracts. Therefore, he demanded that the Government should prosecute him,[1] and accordingly Passaran was brought before the Justices of Middlesex, but released on bail; and no further steps were taken in the matter. Against this failure to execute justice Gibson protested strongly,[2] and his indignation increased when the audacious author published a further pamphlet. He requested the Ministry to consider 'what a height licentiousness was come to, when a person actually under prosecution for one blasphemous book, thought he might with impunity publish another of the same kind'.[3] Eighteen months after his original remonstrance, Gibson was complaining that the culprit was 'still under prosecution', and that his insolence was growing as he saw that no steps would be taken against him.[4] Finally, Passaran deemed it expedient to cross over to Holland, where he continued to publish his tracts, in one of which he paid a high tribute to the sincerity

[1] Gibson to C. Delafaye, 4 Nov. 1732, S. P. Dom. Geo. II, B. 28.
[2] Same to same, 11 Nov. and 25 Nov. 1732, ibid., B. 28.
[3] Same to same, 28 Feb. 1733/4, ibid., B. 31.
[4] Same to same, 28 May 1734, ibid., B. 32.

and fearlessness of his episcopal antagonist.[1] This example is typical of the militant zeal of Gibson, and of the dilatory and cautious methods of the Government. Happily the weapon of persecution was not exercised, and the *Analogy* of Butler remains the symbol of a nobler victory over Deism than could have been won by the coercive measures of Gibson. For the theological controversy exhausted itself before the middle of the century, and the Deists left the field to the triumphant defenders of orthodoxy. As a movement Deism had failed chiefly for two reasons; it could not support and quicken individual religion, and it could not discover a satisfactory interpretation of the Bible. Its champions were ignorant of the historical method and had no conception of progressive revelation. But they broke down the tyrannies which the Church and Scripture had endeavoured to establish over the human mind, and the positive results of their labours were to be seen in the effect which they produced upon the Christian apologists themselves, whose methods and conclusions were manifestly influenced by their speculations.

If the consideration of Gibson's attitude towards the Deists has cast doubts upon his sympathy with toleration, it is to be feared that his opposition to the Latitudinarians will shake still more his reputation. For though he was ready to make bold and sincere professions of a readiness to welcome the freest possible inquiry into the basis of revelation, he could not easily tolerate any one whose conclusions differed from his own. Consequently his attitude towards the Latitudinarian clergy was one of stiff and inflexible hostility. Though he could not prevent their admission into the ministry, he was determined to prevent them from securing high promotion. Yet this body of divines, whom he thus endeavoured to suppress, were the representatives of the most important movement of opinion which the Church had experienced since the Reformation.

'For whatever may have been its deficiencies, there was no religious movement of such lasting importance as that which from the latter part of the seventeenth until near the end of the eighteenth century was being carried on under the opprobrium of Latitudi-

[1] Passaran, 'A Succint History of Priesthood', London, 1737, *supra*, p. 254 n.

narianism. . . . Its importance may be intimated in this, that of all the questions in which it was chiefly interested there is scarcely one which has not started into fresh life in our own days and which is not likely to gain increasing significance as time advances.'[1]

The Latitudinarian strain, indeed, may be traced back to many thinkers of the seventeenth century, who could not be comprehended under the later definition of the term. 'Hooker himself may head the list, then men like Hales of Eton, Falkland, Chillingworth and Jeremy Taylor.'[2] To these must be added the names of Stillingfleet, of those who constituted the school of Cambridge Platonists, of Baxter and of Archbishop Tillotson. The Latitudinarian tradition had a goodly heritage; and its task now was to prepare the Church for those changes which were necessitated by its new intellectual environment. It is difficult to describe this new orientation in a brief sentence; but generally speaking, it may be affirmed that 'the Latitudinarians were Churchmen to whom the Gospel was rather a reasonable and moral revelation than a corpus of dogma'.[3] The strength of their position lay in their insistence that 'the spirit in Man was the candle of the Lord', lighted by God and lighting man to God, and that the foundation of religion was the moral consciousness of man. 'The vigour of English theology at this period—and it was the golden period of English theology—is due to the fact that for some time reason and Christian theology were in spontaneous alliance.'[4] The tendency of Latitudinarians, therefore, was to lay emphasis upon the rational and moral aspects of revelation and to pass lightly over its theological dogmas and supernatural phenomena. In the fierce warfare of the Deist controversy, however, their temper of tolerance and conciliation seemed a dangerous quality to the more rigid champions of orthodoxy. So the Latitudinarians, who were chiefly represented by Hoadly and Dr. Samuel Clarke, were liable to be denounced as traitors, and as men who were anxious to use the latitude of belief which

[1] Abbey and Overton, *The English Church in the Eighteenth Century*, i, p. 270.
[2] Gwatkin, *Church and State in England to the Death of Queen Anne*, p. 391.
[3] Ibid., p. 390.
[4] Leslie Stephen, *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, i, p. 79.

they claimed, to introduce Arianism into the Church. This was the view which Gibson took of them. He wrote to Berkeley that there was 'little trouble from professed infidels, but a great deal from semi-infidels, who, under the title of Christians, were destroying the whole work of our Redemption by Christ and making Christianity little more than a system of morality'.[1] His own theology was somewhat rigid, and he distrusted those who sought to dissociate the Sermon on the Mount, as being the essence of Christianity, from dogmatic statements on such subjects as the Trinity or the Atonement. Nor does he appear to have discriminated between the various members of the Latitudinarian party. It was sufficient condemnation in his eyes to belong to it. He had already denounced those who were attempting to frame new theories concerning the Trinity, and were claiming to re-interpret the Articles.[2] He had laid an absolute and unconditional veto upon the proposal to elevate Dr. Clarke to the episcopate and had kept a watchful eye upon the advancement of Hoadly.

The classical instance of his opposition occurred upon the proposal to advance Dr. Thomas Rundle to the see of Gloucester in 1733. The unhappy victim of his displeasure was at that time a Prebendary of Durham, Rector of Sedgefield, and Master of the Hospital of Sherburn. In his younger days he had been a friend of Whiston, and 'a zealous promoter of primitive Christianity', having been a member of Whiston's society.[3] Falling under the influence of Dr. Samuel Clarke, however, he had taken Orders and joined forces with the Latitudinarian party in the Church. His preferment had been rapid, in consequence of the patronage of Bishop Talbot, who ordained him, made him one of his domestic chaplains, and advanced him to various dignities in his cathedral at Salisbury. During his residence in this town, Rundle formed an acquaintance, which ripened into a friendship, with Thomas Chubb, the deistical write. When Talbot was translated to Durham, Rundle accompanied him and received suitable preferments

[1] Gibson to Berkeley, 7 Feb. 1735/6, A. C. Fraser, *Berkeley's Works*, vol. iv, *Life and Letters*, p. 244; Oxford, 1871.

[2] In his charge of 1720 at Lincoln, Egerton MSS. 2073, B.M.

[3] Whiston, *Memoirs*, 1741, vol. i, p. 255.

there. His associations with Whiston and with Clarke, his friendship with Chubb, and the patronage which he enjoyed from Talbot, were quite sufficient grounds to occasion suspicions of his orthodoxy.

In December 1733, when it was evident that Dr. Elias Sydal, Bishop of Gloucester, was nearing his end, rumour began to connect the name of Dr. Rundle with the prospective vacancy, and to assert that the powerful influence of Lord Chancellor Talbot, son of the late bishop, was exerted in his favour. So confident were the expectations of his friends, that his appointment was announced in the public press.[1] But they had reckoned without the Bishop of London, who, so soon as the current reports reached his ear, and before the Bishop of Gloucester was actually dead, wrote to the Prime Minister to inform him that he could not approve such a promotion. He declared that, though he was aware of the predilections of the Court, nevertheless 'his own judgement and the regard he owed to his character, and the general sense of the bishops and clergy, would not permit him to concur or acquiesce in it'. There could not be a more inopportune time to promote a person 'whose affection to the constitution of the Church was not clear and unsuspected', and as he himself had made so many enemies by his political measures, he could not 'either in judgement or prudence, submit to anything which would endanger the loss' of the goodwill and support of the majority of the clergy. Since, however, his opposition would 'greatly offend the Court, and draw upon him the displeasure of the Lord Chancellor and all his friends', he asked permission 'to withdraw beforehand' from the office which he held, in order to avoid a conflict. Finally, he expressed the opinion that it would be more decent if the Court should wait until a bishop was actually dead before talking so freely upon the appointment of a successor.[2]

It is important to observe that this letter, giving clear

[1] *Gentleman's Magazine*, Jan. 1734, p. 52.

[2] Gibson to Walpole, n.d.; there is a Note in Gibson's hand: 'This letter written before ye late Bishop of Gloucester's death and before I knew anything of Mr. Venn's affair', Gibson MSS. iii. 50. For the correspondence between Gibson and Walpole, see Appendix E, Nos. 1–5.

expression to Gibson's opposition, was written before the death of Dr. Sydal, because it was frequently asserted that his hostility was based upon a certain utterance ascribed to Rundle, which will be noticed later.[1] The testimony of this epistle shows that this supposition is false. Gibson's determination not to allow the offender to come upon the Bench was not based upon any particular incident or saying, but upon the general conclusion that his 'affection to the constitution of the Church was not clear and unsuspected', i. e. that he was identified with the liberal and heterodox party. This same statement disproves a parallel assertion that the grounds of the Bishop's resolution were not theological but political, proceeding from a jealousy of the influence of the Lord Chancellor.[2] Had he desired to challenge the latter, he would rather have grasped at the opportunity thus afforded, than made a definite offer of resignation in order to relieve the Ministry from the difficulties of a contest.

On the 22nd December, Bishop Sydal died, and the question became of immediate importance. Accordingly, Gibson sent a second letter to Walpole, reiterating his former sentiments. He added also that having made inquiries, he had discovered that 'the design of making Dr. Rundle, Bishop of Gloucester, had given great offence to the clergy and . . . that the uneasiness was general, among the Whig as well as the Tory part of them'. With regard to his own position, in view of the special relation which he bore to the Ministry and 'the discourse there had long been about a higher station', it would be inevitable that his acquiescence in the promotion would raise a cry of 'sacrificing the interests of Religion and the Established Church to his own private views' and, therefore, he reaffirmed his decision not 'to expose himself to so grievous a reproach' upon any consideration, but 'to withdraw from all ecclesiastical work except that of his own diocese'.[3] This second letter confirms the two points insisted on above; that the true reasons for his opposition were theological, and that they referred to the

[1] Cf. 'The Reasons against Dr. Rundle's Promotion, &c., seriously and dispassionately considered', London, 1734, p. 20.

[2] Hervey, *Memoirs of the Reign of George II*, vol. i, p. 448. See ch. 5, p. 156, *supra*.

[3] Gibson to Walpole, n.d., Gibson MSS. iii. 51.

general character of Rundle's opinions, not to any particular expression of them. On St. Stephen's day, however, the Bishop had an unexpected visitor. One Mr. Richard Venn, the rector of St. Antholin's, a well-known city clergyman, called upon his diocesan to offer an objection against Dr. Rundle's fitness for the office of a bishop. The matter related to certain words spoken by the doctor in a mixed company several years before, which were calculated to disparage the authority of the Scriptures. At the request of his superior, Mr. Venn drew up a written statement of the conversation ' with which Dr. Rundle was pleased to entertain himself and some others, who were quite strangers to him, in a mixed company, after a most unreserved and indecent manner '. His account related how,

' upon some discourse of the controversies then afoot, he (Rundle) took occasion to fall upon Abraham's offering up his son Isaac, as an action unjust and unnatural; that it was the remains of his idolatrous education, and proceeded from a vain affectation of exceeding other nations that had indeed been guilty of human sacrifices but had not yet carried the point so far as with their own hands to attempt the slaying of an only child; that in order to justify and heighten his character in the esteem of his friends, he pretended a revelation from God, commissioning him to enter upon this bloody affair.' [1]

Such was the indictment against Rundle, and Mr. Venn assured the Bishop that if the nomination were allowed to proceed, he would make a formal protest on the occasion of the confirmation, together with another person who was an auditor of the conversation. Gibson, therefore, dispatched a further letter to the Prime Minister, placing this new information before him, and describing the offensive behaviour as a ' speaking slightingly of revelation as an uncertain guide and openly ridiculing one point of great note and importance both in the Old and New Testaments '. This incident had increased his determination ' not to be thought consenting to the promotion but to have it understood that he truly and heartily did all he could to prevent it ', and he therefore still desired to resign his position, though he was prepared to postpone that action until the close

[1] ' Deposition of Mr. R. Venn ', 27 Dec. 1733, Gibson MSS. iii. 54.

of the forthcoming session of parliament, which would be the last before the new elections.[1]

By this time the news of the opposition of the Bishop of London to the Lord Chancellor's protégé was well known, and the disclosure of the objection urged by Mr. Venn was immediately seized upon as a splendid topic for satire and ridicule. The friends of Rundle protested loudly against the unfairness of 'judging of the whole reputation of a man from an unguarded expression, dropped fifteen or sixteen years ago, and now revived and perhaps dressed up in odious colours'.[2] A virulent campaign of pamphlet warfare was launched against Gibson. He was accused of all possible crimes, moral and political, and pointed reference was made to the Jacobite indiscretions of his own youthful days, with the suggestion that only substantial rewards had persuaded him of the justice of the Hanoverian claim.[3] A particular show of indignation was affected at the system of espionage and delation which he had perfected. He was supposed to have a host of spies, ready always to invent informations against clergy whose political or theological opinions were obnoxious to him, and a great outcry was raised against his spiritual dictatorship.

> My keys may with St. Peter's vie
> I am the way to Dignity:
> That way whose vast abrupt implies
> The holy watch of hundred spies.[4]

[1] Gibson to Walpole, n.d., iii, 52.

[2] 'The Reasons against Dr. Rundle's Promotion, &c., seriously and dispassionately considered', p. 20, London, 1734; cf. *Gent. Mag.*, 1734, p. 196.

[3] Cf. 'Dr. Codex's Fifth Pastoral', London, 1734, T. Cooper:

> What though my optics heretofore
> With C[ode]x lucubrations sore
> Could not discern a G[eor]ge's Right
> J[ame]s so confused my doubtful sight.
> 'Twas in my days of Nature . . . Grace
> Could stains of prejudice erase.
> When seen through veil of purest L[aw]n
> The genuine king began to dawn
> And now full-blown with genial blaze
> I would monopolise his rays.

Bp. Gibson Pamphlets, xv. 16, Sion College.

[4] 'Dr. Codex's Fifth Pastoral', London, 1734; cf. also:

> Each Coffee House records the tricks
> Of C[ode]x vulpine politicks.

On the other hand, the defenders of Gibson began to enlarge upon the enormity of Dr. Rundle's blasphemy. It was pointed out that he was charged with 'a denial of a fact which is expressly affirmed by Moses in the Old Testament and by St. Paul and St. James in the New'.[1] St. Paul had affirmed that 'by faith Abraham . . . offered up Isaac' [Heb. xi. 17]; Dr. Rundle had seen in his act 'the remains of his idolatrous education'. The point was magnified greatly for controversial purposes, but it was not, of course, the original feature of Gibson's charge against the would-be prelate.[2]

Meanwhile Gibson, expecting that the nomination would proceed, was preparing to give effect to the protest which Mr. Venn intended to make at the confirmation. With characteristic energy and research, he had discovered a precedent in the case of Dr. Montague in 1628/9. Dr. Montague was a favourite divine in Court circles, and Charles I nominated him to the see of Chichester, despite the fact that certain of his writings had fallen under the censure of a former Parliament. On the day appointed for his confirmation, when Dr. Rives attended, on behalf of the vicar-general, Dr. Brent, to receive objections in the Church of St. Mary-le-Bow, a certain Mr. Jones, a bookseller, offered some objections, which were dismissed on account of a technical irregularity. A question was asked in the House of Commons concerning the matter on the 4th February 1628/9, when Dr. Rives answered that with reference to Mr. Jones' objections 'they were first tendered *ore tenus*, then in writing, which he refused, because there was no advocate's hand to them; and that Jones desired time till the next day to bring an advocate's hand, which he refused, holding it dangerous both for him and the aforesaid bishop to delay the confirmation, conceiving the danger to be a Praemunire'.[3] This precedent established the legality of objecting to a con-

[1] *The Weekly Miscellany*, Saturday, 7th Dec. 1734, No. civ.

[2] It is interesting to observe that a similar doubt, expressed in *Essays and Reviews*, was one of the things singled out by Dr. Pusey for vigorous denunciation a century later. *Life of Pusey*, iv, p. 41: 'When Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac is attributed not to God but to "the fierce ritual of Syria".'

[3] Extract from the *Journal of the House of Commons*, 4th Feb. 1728/9; and from Collier, *Ecclesiastical History* (ii, p. 475), in Gibson's hand, Gibson MSS. iii. 56.

firmation and Gibson was forewarned of the illegalities to be avoided.[1]

These signs of the determination of the Bishop of London were producing the desired effect upon Walpole, who viewed with increasing apprehension the prospect that the elections of 1734 would be conducted with the resounding cry of 'the Church in danger'. If the banners of 'Church Militant' were raised, and the whole weight of clerical influence exercised against him, he could have little hope of securing a good parliament. Nevertheless, the Chancellor was as unyielding as the Prelate. He would no more consent to withdraw the nomination, than the other to accept it. But Gibson's political loyalty was so strong that he was unwilling in any way to harass the Government, and he therefore agreed that the Prime Minister should suspend the affair 'first till the Session was at an end, and then till the elections were over'. Accordingly the question was left in abeyance and the Administration secured its parliamentary majority. Walpole would have been glad to postpone the decision still further, for his position was uncomfortable and unenviable. There were rumours that Lord Talbot would give up the Great Seal rather than desert Rundle, against whom the Bishop of London had discovered further evidence during the interval.

A certain Dr. Charles Lamotte, now a chaplain in the household of the Duke of Montague, near Kettering, who had known Rundle when he had been 'tutor to Squire Cater's son at Kempton in Bedfordshire' in 1712, wrote to inform Gibson that even in those days Rundle 'was very free in his speech and very loose in his religion, talking sometimes like an Arian,

[1] Cf. 'The Bishop or No Bishop: or the Disappointed Doctor', London, n.d., C. Proctor, Bp. Gibson Pamphlets, xv. 17, Sion College:

E'er Montague the Crozier sway'd
In vain the same foul trick was play'd . . .
But soon the prelate gain'd redress
Triumphantly he graced the Lawn
And fruitless Caveats were withdrawn.
But here 'tis positively said
The process legally was made
With atheism charg'd the aspiring pr[ies]t
And made him worse than man or beast.

sometimes like a Socinian', with the result that the Vicar of St. Paul's, Bedford, had refused to visit Mr. Cater.[1] The Bishop therefore determined to press for a speedy settlement of the question. He told Walpole that 'the objections against a declaration on the part of the Court were now removed, and though there would be difficulties whatever the final resolution might be, he did not see that they were like to be lessened by time. On the contrary, the scurrility and insolence with which that point was managed on one side was breeding more and more ill blood on the other, and would continue to do so, as long as it remained undetermined'. In pressing for a speedy decision, he proceeded to play his trump card. The indisposition of the Archbishop would lay the duty of consecrating upon him, and he intended to refuse to consecrate Rundle. He informed the Prime Minister that 'on supposition that Dr. Rundle was to be the person, he took it for granted that the Lord Chancellor had made himself sure of a sufficient number of bishops who would act in the Commission to consecrate and be ready to come to Town upon the Archbishop's summons'. In conclusion he again emphasized the danger of further delay.[2]

This bombshell created consternation in the ministerial camp. The Lord Chancellor spoke darkly of the penalties of Praemunire, but it was clear that the Act of 25 Henry VIII concerned the Archbishop only and not his suffragans, except in the case of a vacancy of the archbishopric, when the Letters Patent would be directed to them. Therefore, Gibson could not be prosecuted for refusal to act by a delegated power.[3] Moreover, Walpole knew the strength of his determination, and was not prepared himself to face the ecclesiastical storm which would arise, if Rundle were consecrated without the presence of the Bishop of London and those who agreed with him. He determined to take a middle course and sent Gibson to offer the bishopric to Archdeacon Martin Benson, who had

[1] Dr. C. Lamotte to Bp. Gibson, 26 Oct. 1734, Gibson MSS. iii. 55.
[2] Gibson to Walpole, n.d., Gibson MSS. iii. 53.
[3] Hervey, *Memoirs of the Reign of George II*, vol. i, p. 453; cf. *The Weekly Miscellany*, Saturday, 7th Dec. 1734, No. civ.

also been a protégé of the late Bishop Talbot and was a friend of the Lord Chancellor. With great difficulty a promise of acceptance was secured, and in December 1734, to the great relief of Prelate and Prime Minister, the See of Gloucester was filled after a vacancy of a twelvemonth.[1]

Dr. Rundle, it must be admitted, had conducted himself with commendable reticence and restraint during the whole controversy. It is not necessary to make inquiries into the exact degree of heterodoxy of which he was guilty. The story of his remarks on Abraham and Isaac was not the real cause of the opposition to him, and, therefore, he did not need to defend himself against it. It was sufficient that he belonged to the Latitudinarian party in the Church. In a letter which he wrote to Mr. Duncombe during the contest, after remarking that he had refrained from taking any step in the matter at all, he continued :

'If an intimate knowledge of me and the highest friendship [of Lord Talbot] for me during twenty years together, is not a sufficient testimony to my reputation, nor to be preferred to Mr. Venn's, I must be contented to suffer at present. . . . I have not lived with obscure men, but have enjoyed the favour of others who are esteemed by all that love this nation and our constitution. . . . I am an open talkative man, and not one of my acquaintance ever suspected my disbelief of the Christian Religion from any expression that ever dropt from me, in the most unguarded hour of vehemence in dispute. I never omitted one opportunity of defending it in private, when the turn of conversation made it decent ; or in public when the disputes of the age made it necessary. I have spoken Charges to the clergy or preached on the most solemn occasions against Collins, Woolston, and Tindal as multitudes will and have testified. . . . I do not doubt but the Bishop of London thinks me a very bad man and thinks that in opposing me, he doth God and the Church good service ; but it is not me, but the phantom represented to him that he so vehemently opposes. If he knew me possibly I should have the favour of his esteem and recommendation. I only complain that he prefers a tittle tattle hearsay character from men that have no intimacy with me, to

[1] *Gent. Mag.*, 1734, Dec., p. 704.

the Dean of Christ Church (Dr. Conybeare) whom he loves, to all my acquaintance, to the Speaker and the Lord Chancellor.'[1]

Pope also paid a high tribute to Rundle's character, saying that he had seldom seen a man whom he liked so well.[2] The disappointed doctor, however, received some compensation by the offer in July 1735 of the see of Derry, where he went into lucrative episcopal exile, comparing his lot with that which Plato designed for Homer, 'first do him honour, reward his merit and then banish him.'[3] Swift was enthusiastic to welcome him in the Irish Church and wrote to Pope that he was worth all the rest ever sent there.[4]

It was not to the personal character of Rundle that Gibson had objected, but to the principles of Latitudinarianism of which he was a representative, and in this respect the Bishop's opposition was inflexible. Despite the hostility of the Lord

[1] Rundle to Duncombe, 9 Dec. 1734, J. Hughes, *Letters of Several Eminent Persons*, vol. ii, Letter xcvii, p. 35.

[2] Pope to Swift, ibid., p. 36 n.

[3] Rundle's fate became proverbial for the lot of an unsuccessful divine; cf. the satirical picture of episcopal opulence:

> Then on the C[our]t each morn he close attends
> And fawns most servile to obtain his ends,
> If he succeeds, ten thousand annual rent
> Supplies Life's comfort but gives not content . . .
>
> But if he fails and dares his foes upbraid
> To calm him, he 's an Irish B[isho]p made
> I mean no one alone, all censures free
> Nor say that Codex or that S[a]r[u]m 's he.

'The Female Speaker or the Priests in the Wrong', London, 1735, B.M. 11602, i. 5.

[4] Swift's appreciation was voiced in characteristic language:

> Rundle a Bishop—well he may
> He 's still a Christian more than they.
> We know the subject of their quarrels,
> The man has learning, sense and morals.
> There is a reason still more weighty,
> 'Tis granted he believes a Deity,
> Has every circumstance to please us
> Though fools may doubt his faith in Jesus;
> But why should he with that be loaded
> Now twenty years from Court exploded?
> And is not this objection odd
> From rogues who ne'er believed in God?

Swift: "On Dr. Rundle, Bishop of Derry": The Aldine Edition of the Poetical Works of Swift: vol. iii. p. 179. London: 1853, cf. F. E. Ball: Correspondence of Swift: vol. v. p. 227, 242; London: 1913.

Chancellor, the alienation of the Court, the embarrassment of the Ministry, and the criticism of some of the bishops, he had stood firm. But though he had gained his point, it is doubtful if he had brought the desired peace and unity to the Church. Bishop Hare felt that his policy had been profoundly mistaken, and had drawn great unpopularity upon the Bench. It was impossible 'to keep from the Bench all who might be supposed not hearty friends to the Constitution, at least if into that number were to be reckoned all who were known or suspected to be in some points heterodox and freethinkers'. At the very time of the controversy, Hare had 'earnestly wished that the affair might be accommodated', and although he thought Rundle 'the most obnoxious of all' who might be raised to the episcopate, nevertheless the episode had demonstrated 'how vain an attempt it would be to endeavour to exclude others against whom there should be no other objection but a want of orthodoxy in certain points'.[1] Gibson, however, would not tolerate any suggestion of compromise. He acknowledged that his conduct in this affair had been representative of 'his thoughts of a heterodox and freethinking bishop', and that he did not approve of the offer of Derry to Rundle. From the comparative peace of his retirement, after his quarrel with Walpole, he looked back with satisfaction upon the part he had played in these events. 'As soon as we see one or two instances of such a promotion', he replied to Hare's criticism, 'people will quickly see which is the surest way to the Bench and freethinking will appear to triumph to a much greater degree than it has hitherto done. In all such cases the sure rule is *principiis obsta*; and it is now a great satisfaction to me that it has been my own rule in making a stand against heterodox promotions.'[2] It was in vain that his correspondent rejoined that, though the rule might be a good one, yet it was 'not only prudent but absolutely necessary in public ministers, either in Church or State, to recede on some occasions and make some concessions in compliance with the times and circumstances of things'. The Bishop of Chichester modified principle by expediency.

[1] Hare to Gibson, 2 Aug. 1736, Gibson MSS. iii. 70.
[2] Gibson to Hare, 4 Aug., ibid. 71.

He argued that ' when one could not do what one could most wish and what was perfectly right, one must be content to choose the *minus malum* ; and such it was to agree to such a promotion rather than draw down upon the bishops the resentment of those who had it so much in their power to hurt and at the same time were not unfriendly disposed towards them '.[1] The precarious position of the Church, and the strength of its enemies demanded that it should make peace with the representatives of Latitudinarianism. But Gibson would not be persuaded. He was convinced that ' when it was once found that such concessions would be made, the demands would multiply apace ; on the other hand, if it was found that the concessions would not be made, the demands would cease ' ; or if they should go on, and be carried by a higher hand ' the Church would at least have the satisfaction of knowing what bottom it was upon '.[2]

It is evident from the above correspondence that Gibson's opposition to Rundle was part of a convinced policy. He was determined to use his influence against the Latitudinarian divines. It was not without justice that the satirists depicted him moving in triumphant procession to Canterbury preceded by the effigies of Whiston, Hoadly, Rundle, and Clarke carried by his priests,[3] for his authority had been exercised with evident determination and effect in the task of rooting out heresy and false doctrine. Similarly, in his zeal for orthodoxy, he had insisted on the regular recitation of the Athanasian Creed as prescribed by the rubric. Archbishop Tillotson in

[1] Hare to Gibson, 7 Aug., ibid. 72.

[2] Gibson to Hare, 10 Aug., ibid. 73 ; cf. :

> Those who a jot from Mother Church recede
> He damns like any Athanasian Creed
> He rails at Hoadly ; so can zeal possess him
> He 's orthodox as G[i]bs[o]n's self, God bless him.

R. Savage, *The Progress of a Divine*, i. 150, London, 1735, B.M. 643, m. 14 (7).

[3] *The Hierarchical Skimington*, London, 1735 :

> First in procession march along
> Of Jesuits a numerous throng
> Bearing aloft that all may see
> The Sons of Schism in Effigy.

B.M. ' Catalogue of Prints and Drawings,' Div. I, Satires, vol. iii, Pt. I, 2149.

his *Essay on the Improvement of the Liturgy* had suggested that its use should be discontinued 'because of the scruples arising from the damnatory passages therein', but Gibson required that, in Whiston's amusing phrase, 'the Eusebians or Primitive Christians should be publicly cursed thirteen times every year . . . by the reading the monstrous Athanasian Creed by his clergy.'[1] It must be acknowledged that Gibson had taken up too rigid an attitude in regard to the Latitudinarians, whom he had branded with the stigma of heterodoxy. The success of his policy would have been derogatory to the best interests of the Church, and the nation owes a debt of gratitude to Queen Caroline for the liberality of mind which enabled her to become no less the patron and defender of the Latitudinarian divines than the friend of the author of *The Analogy*.

[1] Whiston, *Memoirs*, i, p. 253; cf.:

> If Faith is faith 'tis orthodox—in brief
> Belief, not orthodox, is not belief,
> And who has not belief, pronounce him plain
> No Christian—Codex bids you this maintain.

R. Savage, *The Progress of a Divine*, i. 373, London, 1735, B.M. 643, m. 14 (7).

IX

A PRELATE MILITANT

Defensor Ecclesiae

THE aggressive militancy of Bishop Gibson was not confined to his attempts to suppress the infidels without the Church and the Latitudinarians within, but was extended to a jealous vigilance over the activities of the Dissenters. He regarded it as part of his duty to keep them in check and to confine them within the boundaries of the Toleration Act. The passing of this Act in 1689, indeed, had marked the opening of a new epoch in the history of Protestant Nonconformity. Although the Act itself afforded only a partial relief, nevertheless, after the persecution suffered since the Restoration, the boon, if intrinsically small, was relatively great. An apparently irrevocable sentence of death had been lifted and this more than in the way of respite, and the triumph had 'signalized the close of Nonconformity's long struggle for existence and conferred upon it in perpetuity the right to be'.[1] The results of this liberation were seen immediately in the building of Meeting Houses, both in London and the provinces, and in the fact that Presbyterians now ventured to perform their ordinations in public.[2] Evidence of the strength of Dissent is furnished by the circumstances that 'during the end of William III's reign there came into existence more than a thousand meeting-places of various kinds', and that even the Quakers obtained as many as two hundred and thirty-nine licences (one hundred and thirty-one temporary, the rest permanent) within the first two years after the passing of the Act.[3] The last decade of the seventeenth century witnessed the consolidation of Nonconformity after the

[1] H. W. Clark, *History of English Nonconformity*, 2 vols., London, 1913; vol. i, p. 119. See also: Stoughton, *History of Religion in England*, vols. v and vi; H. S. Skeats, *A History of the Free Churches of England* (2nd ed.), London, 1869; Bogue and Bennet, *History of Dissenters*, 4 vols., London, 1808.

[2] Stoughton, vol. v, *The Church of the Revolution*, p. 283.

[3] Clark, op. cit., i, pp. 139–40.

failure of the last serious effort at Comprehension. But the battle was not yet entirely won. High Churchmen who had given some degree of welcome to Nonconformity as an ally in the struggle against Rome, regarded it with very different eyes after its establishment as a rival religious organization. When the accession of Anne removed the unwelcome influence of the Calvinist monarch, they began immediately to work for the curtailment of the privileges recently granted to Dissenters. A Bill against Occasional Conformity was introduced into the House of Commons so early as 1702, and was revived in the two succeeding years, being rejected on each occasion by the Lords. Dr. Sacheverell embarked upon a deliberate campaign of defamation and abuse against Nonconformity, and in the tumults occasioned by his trial the wrecking of meeting houses broke out again. The return of a Tory majority in the elections of 1710 enabled the enemies of Dissent to give full rein to their malice. By a corrupt political bargain the Occasional Conformity Act was passed in 1711, and even more serious was the passing of the Schism Act three years later. If this latter law had ever become operative it would have secured the extinction of Nonconformity by excluding it from all direct influence in education. The design of the Tories was to push Nonconformists up against the hard choice between renouncing their religious principles, or abandoning all hope of serving society and the State, in the hope that the die would be cast in favour of the former. 'As compared with the measure of Charles II's time it did but substitute sieging for a massacre, a steady and relentless pressure for a single destructive stroke.'[1] Happily the sudden death of Anne and the peaceful accession of George I prevented the Schism Act from ever being put in operation. The circumstances of the new dynasty also encouraged the Dissenters to hope that the other restrictions which had been placed upon their liberty by the Tories would be annulled, even if further concessions were not made. The personal sympathies of the King, the political necessities of the Administration, the menace of Jacobite disaffection were all influences working in their favour, and when there was added to these in 1715 the

[1] H. W. Clark, *History of English Nonconformity*, ii, p. 151.

loyalty which Nonconformists showed in the rebellion, in strong contrast to the vacillation of many Churchmen, their claim for considerate treatment seemed to be established. Accordingly in 1719 an Act was passed repealing the Occasional Conformity and Schism Acts, and placing the Dissenters in the unrestricted but unextended enjoyment of the measure of liberty granted to them in 1689. This very moderate act of justice had been opposed by Archbishop Wake and many of the Bench, but nevertheless the battle for Toleration had been finally won, and Nonconformity had secured its charter of existence.

It was evident, however, that this situation was only temporary, and that the present compromise could not be indefinitely maintained. 'The natural line of progress—having regard to the fact that the Toleration Act had bestowed so much and had not yet bestowed all that was required—was in the direction of removing remaining Nonconformist disabilities and of increasing positive Nonconformist power and range.'[1] The Dissenter, feeling secure in the maintenance of that which had been already granted, might well look round to see if to him that had, more could not be given, and if this demand for the extension of privileges had been pushed with steady and determined pressure, it is difficult to believe that it could have been refused. But the explanation of its failure is to be found in the circumstance that Nonconformity, like the Church, was not in an aggressive mood. To a large extent the same influences were at work in both societies. Both had exhausted their energies in the succession of conflicts which had marked their history in the previous century, and were consequently in need of a period of recuperation and tranquillity. Both were compelled to make their peace with the Whig Government, as the only security for the Protestant succession, and to accept to some degree its policy of *quieta non movere*. The Church was brought into close connexion with the Ministry through the intimate alliance of Walpole and Gibson; and the acceptance by Nonconformity of the Regium Donum, a half-yearly grant of five hundred pounds from the royal purse 'for the use and behalf of the poor widows of Dissenting ministers', implied that

[1] H. W. Clark, *History of English Nonconformity*, ii, p. 175.

political services would be expected in return. Indeed, the King remarked, at the time of the first gift to Calamy in 1721 that 'in the approaching election of Members of Parliament, he depended on them (the Dissenters) to use their influence . . . in favour of such as were hearty for himself and his family'.[1] Similarly, Nonconformity could not remain unaffected by the Latitudinarian movement within the Church, nor that of Deism without it, and in 1719 the famous Salters' Hall Controversy began, which led to the discovery of various degrees of heterodoxy in the ranks of the Dissenting ministry, the waging of a prolonged controversy, and the emergence of the first congregations of the organized Unitarian Church.[2] From these considerations it is evident that the fortunes of the Church and of Nonconformity still ran closely parallel, that they could not avoid interconnexion and interdependence, and that on the whole, a temporary decline was affecting both.

The question of the relations between the Church and Dissent was of particular interest to Gibson. His policy of an alliance between the Whig party and the Church could not be successful unless he established a concordat with Nonconformity. The Whigs could not afford to lose the support of the Dissenters, and Gibson's position was bound up with their continuance in office. Therefore it was essential to him to adopt a conciliatory attitude towards the Dissenting interest. Nor did it seem impossible that he should be successful in this. He had been trained in the household of Tenison and had passed through the difficult years of the Tory reaction under Anne, when the dangers of a Jacobite restoration had been very real. It could be expected that he would understand the necessity of a union of the Protestant forces, and would be willing to make the necessary concessions in order to effect it. Yet it was precisely on this point that he failed, and his failure helped to widen the gulf which was already parting him from Walpole, and so to bring about his downfall in 1736. The governing principle of his policy, both in political and ecclesiastical affairs, was his conviction of the necessity of maintaining the settlement of 1689 unchanged.

[1] Stoughton, op. cit., vol. v, *The Church of the Revolution*, p. 421.
[2] Clark, op. cit., pp. 194–6.

To his mind ' the distinguishing characteristics of a Whig for thirty years ' past had been the maintenance of ' the Protestant Succession, the Church Establishment and the Toleration Act '.[1] He regarded the Toleration Act as sacrosanct, and resisted every attempt to pass beyond its provisions. This attitude was based upon the half-unconscious assumption that the true position of Nonconformity was one of entire subordination to the interests of the Church. The Dissenters had been granted freedom of worship and a certain degree of public recognition, but their aspirations to equality could never be met. Their only duty was to ' sit still and be content ' with what they had received.

Gibson's sentiments did not proceed from any antipathy to Dissenters. He thought the Comprehension Scheme of 1689 very consistent, and wished it had been successful. For ' then, there was no meaning on any side but to mend and improve, and the Dissenters were in a disposition to be thankful for any concessions in their favour as a bounty on the part of the Church '.[2] Upon its failure the Toleration Act had been passed and its provisions seemed to him quite satisfactory. They had put the Dissenters in possession of ' an entire liberty of conscience ', and consequently ' when their Toleration was abridged in the reign of Queen Anne, they were restored to the full enjoyment of it in the next reign '. Gibson had defended them during these latter years of affliction. He had preached sermons against the dangers of Popery, and, exhorting all the reformed Churches to draw together in defence of their Protestant faith, had commended to them Archbishop Sancroft's Articles of Directions to the bishops and clergy of his province in 1688. In 1719 also, when the Occasional Conformity and Schism Acts were repealed, he had parted from his friends,

[1] Gibson, ' My Case in Relation to the Ministry and the Whigs ', Gibson MSS. iv. 32.

[2] Gibson to Bishop of Worcester, 1735, ibid., vii. 25. Gibson had in his possession ' the Book of Common Prayer in which were entered all the amendments proposed and resolv'd in the Jerusalem Chamber ann. 1689 ', together with ' several loose papers of Bishop Williams (who attended constantly) wherein he had set down every evening when he went home, the particular propositions and debates of yt day '. Gibson to Wake, 19 Jan. 1715/6, Wake MSS. xx, Miscellaneous, vol. iv (1715–18).

Wake and Nicolson and had supported the Dissenters. Beyond this, however, he would not advance a single step, and consequently he came into conflict with the Nonconformists when they persisted in attempting to secure the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts.

Fortunately for him their efforts were neither powerful nor continuous. 'The few attempts they put forth at enlarging the gains they already possessed were spasmodic, and, except for the initial movement of each, feebly made, and they were not pushed home.'[1] In July 1727 the ministers of the 'three Denominations' in London, i. e. the Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Baptists, formed themselves into a united organization for the purpose of asserting Nonconformist claims. The same year witnessed the passing of the first Annual Indemnity Act, which afforded an indirect relief to those who through ignorance or accident had failed to comply with the requirements of the Test and Corporation Acts. This brief spell of activity was succeeded by a lull, until in 1732 the ministers of the three Denominations decided to call in the aid of lay reinforcements, and, as a result of two meetings held in November, the body known as the 'Dissenting Deputies' was formed, a committee to which each church of these denominations within ten miles of London was to elect two members annually. The specific business of this assembly was to watch over and defend the civil rights of Nonconformists, and the Prime Minister, taking alarm, called in the help of Hoadly to persuade them that the time was exceedingly inopportune for any motion to repeal the Test and Corporation Acts. As a result of the Bishop's conversations with them the committee decided to advise their electors not to risk a defeat at that juncture.

Timorous and ineffective though these proposals may seem, they inspired in Gibson a feeling of concern and apprehension. He lamented that the Dissenters were no longer 'the meek and moderate people' of a generation ago, but that they had 'grown to a great degree of rudeness, not to say insolence, towards the constitution of the Church'. 'The truth is', he

[1] Clark, *History of English Nonconformity*, vol. ii, p. 181.

wrote to Bishop Hough of Worcester, 'those who have no religion, those who though they have some religion are for no Church Establishment, and those who, though they be for an Establishment, are not for the present one: these three, uniting zealously at this time in the work of pulling down, make a very formidable strength.'[1] Therefore, he was determined to resist all proposals to modify the restrictive legislation. It was evident that the conflict could not be long avoided. The support which the Nonconformist interest gave to the Government in the elections of 1734 gave them an occasion to raise the question of 'Repeals' again. The Dissenting Deputies had an interview with Walpole, who counselled delay but added that if they chose to make the attempt in the following session, he would allow them to introduce their motion.[2]

The prospect that the attempt would be made according to this promise moved Gibson to greater activity. He had already published a pamphlet on the question, during the previous agitation in 1732, in which he had adjusted the dispute 'about the proper time of applying for a repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts' by the simple expedient of asserting that 'no time is proper'.[3] He had insisted that the fundamental points at issue were 'whether or no the Civil Power can establish a National Church; and if they can, whether it is, or is not, conducive to the ends of religion and of publick peace and order, that such a Church be established and after that establishment that it be maintained and preserved'. In reply to the plea that every man had a natural right 'to judge for himself in matters of religion' and to choose which Church he pleased as the purest and best organ of the Christian revelation, Gibson observed that 'Society and Government itself was founded on an abridgement of Natural Rights in such instances and such degrees, as in the judgement of the Legislature, the safety and welfare of the whole required'. He supported his thesis by references to the practice of other nations and challenged the

[1] Gibson to Bishop of Worcester, 1735, Gibson MSS. vii. 25.
[2] Stoughton, op. cit., vol. vi, *The Church in the Georgian Era*, p. 10.
[3] Gibson, 'The Dispute adjusted, about the proper time of applying for a Repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts, by showing that no time is proper', London, 1732.

malcontents to produce a single example of a country where 'civil offices were bestowed without any regard to affection or disaffection to the national religion'. On the other hand, he defended the practice of Occasional Conformity because it admitted to positions of trust those Dissenters who had shown by conforming 'an evidence that though they liked their own way better, they did not think ours unlawful', whereas the present agitation for 'the Repeals' was designed to let in the contumacious anti-Conformists who had 'a rooted aversion' to the Anglican Church and 'thought themselves bound in conscience to do all that was in their power to abolish it'. Finally, he advised the Nonconformists to cease their public demonstrations until they had accomplished three preliminary tasks; the persuasion of the nation that 'there ought to be no Church Establishment at all', or that the present Establishment was improper; of the Crown that 'an Episcopal Church was not so well adapted to the support of Monarchy as the Presbyterian or Independent Model'; and of the Administration that 'among those who were willing to give all the pledges which the Law required for Church and State, there were not numbers or abilities sufficient for the administration of offices, civil and military'. This somewhat truculent manifesto proceeded from Gibson's firm conviction that nothing could prevent a recurrence of the disorders of the Commonwealth, aggravated by the anarchic influences of infidel speculations, save the maintenance of the national Church in all its privilege.

Accordingly he busied himself with preparations for its defence. To the aged Bishop Hough, whose experience had taught him the wisdom of conciliation and whose years disposed him to place a supreme value upon peace, he wrote that the present was not a time when the Church could make overtures to its enemies. 'As long as there was a Church Establishment' in England, he argued, 'it could not surely be right to let those into offices of civil power and trust who were bound by principle to endeavour the destruction of it, as being in their opinion unwarrantable and sinful.' Nor were the Dissenters in a frame of mind to accept small concessions gratefully. On the contrary, encouraged by the spectacle of

incessant attacks upon the Church from all quarters, by the Deists, in the Parliament, and even at Court, they were hoping shortly to see the whole edifice collapse. 'Whosoever thinks that this united strength (of the enemies of the Church)', he prophesied, 'aims at less than the subversion of the whole, or that the Dissenters in their exalted state would be content with one concession and sit down with that . . . will assuredly be mistaken.' So soon as the laity had gained their point concerning admission to civil offices, the ministers would come forward with a claim that something should be done for them, and so on until they were in possession of the whole.[1]

Gibson was even more apprehensive with regard to the attitude of the Church's friends than that of its enemies. Although his scheme for the maintenance of a close alliance between the Whigs and the Church, which involved a harmonious co-operation with the Dissenters, was now being threatened, the situation might still be saved if the Court and the Ministry would make a firm stand and inform their Nonconformist friends that the national interests must be put first, and that these demanded the consolidation of forces and the sinking of minor points of difference. But the Court in its perverseness took exactly the opposite course; the opinions of Hoadly, who was Queen Caroline's favourite, were well known, and the sentiments of the King would be aptly expressed in the whispered words of Prince George of Denmark, when he voted for the Occasional Conformity Bill, to a Dissenting peer 'My heart is wid you'. Gibson vainly endeavoured to convince them of the unwisdom of this attitude. He feared that 'the Court by taking the first step in the Dissenters' favour, would lose the affection of the Church, and when they saw that, they would see themselves under a necessity to go the lengths that the enemies of the Church and clergy would have them go'; the results of which policy would be to dissolve the alliance between the Church and the Whigs, and create a national confusion, which would leave open the way for the triumph of the Tories. If such a course of action were persisted in and these disastrous results ensued, he would have the satisfaction of

[1] Gibson to Bishop of Worcester, 1735, Gibson MSS. vii. 25.

knowing that he had discharged his responsibilities by warning its authors. 'We on our part', he wrote, 'are desirous to go on both with the Whigs and Dissenters upon the old bottom, but if they will not, we cannot help it. In using all the strength we have or can make to defend our own boundaries when attacked, we act purely on the defensive and when that is done, if we fall, we shall fall like men.'[1] An emphatic remonstrance was sent to Walpole, with the strong reminder that the Lay Whigs might find themselves unable to stand against their enemies, if the Church deserted or came out into open opposition against them, and the Prime Minister felt the force of these arguments.

Therefore, Gibson, though still apprehensive, began to calculate that the Dissenters would probably find themselves in the minority. He expressed the opinion to Berkeley in July 1735 that if the attempt were made in the coming winter, the movers would find that election promises would be forgotten, if the Court showed a tendency to stand by the Church interest.[2] In the following February, when the venture was about to be made, he was convinced that 'the Court was openly and avowedly against them and so were the Tories', so that their action was somewhat of the nature of a forlorn hope that 'the beginning of it now, though without success, would make the way for better quarter in some future Session'.[3] At last on the 12th March 1735/6, the blow was struck, a private Member from the opposition side, Mr. Plumer, introducing a motion for leave to bring in a Bill for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts. The debate was rather long, but Walpole made a cautious wavering speech and then cast his vote against the measure, which was lost by 125 against 251. This was the last proof of support which Gibson received from the Prime Minister, for the next hurdle proved too high for him. The matter of 'the Repeals' slumbered for a while, after Walpole had summoned up courage to tell the Nonconformist deputation which waited upon him that the time would never

[1] Gibson to Bishop of Worcester, 1735, Gibson MSS. vii. 25.
[2] Gibson to Berkeley, 9 July 1735, Fraser, *Works of Berkeley*, vol. iv, p. 238.
[3] Same to same, 7 Feb. 1735/6, ibid., p. 244.

come, and the inglorious record was concluded by the defeat of a final attempt in March 1739 by 188 votes to 89.[1] The danger from this quarter was removed, and Gibson's fears were not realized.

In another direction Gibson viewed with concern the theological controversies which were engaging the attention of Dissenters. Reference has already been made to the revelation occasioned by the Salters' Hall Controversy in 1719, of the prevalence among the ministers of the three Denominations of varying degrees of heterodoxy, and to the speedy decline towards Socinianism of the General Baptists and the Presbyterians which followed. Such a spectacle of theological instability was highly distressing to Bishop Gibson, and whilst confirming his opinion that the Church could not imperil its own security by a close alliance with the authors of such confusion, nevertheless caused him to complain that Nonconformity had failed to fulfil its duty of helping the Church to combat heresy. The eminent divine Dr. Isaac Watts, who was famous both for his hymns and for his writings in defence of the orthodox faith, sent a copy of his *Essay on the Strength and Weakness of the Human Reason* to Gibson, which was the occasion of commencing a correspondence between them. The Bishop in acknowledging the gift commended it as 'a very laudable exercise' especially as it was 'applied throughout to the good of religion'.[2] Accordingly, Watts continued the practice, sending his lordship in 1735/6 a copy of his book *The Redeemer and Sanctifier* which he had published anonymously, and which drew a very outspoken reply from Gibson. The Bishop first expressed his 'great satisfaction and delight' with the work itself, and then acknowledged that 'the seeing so shameful a departure from true Christianity on these two points had long been a sensible concern and grief to him, and especially when he saw it countenanced and propagated by many who called themselves Christians, but were in reality little more than Deists, for if the great work of our redemption

[1] Stoughton, op. cit., vol. vi, *The Church in the Georgian Era*, p. 10.
[2] Gibson to Dr. Watts, 7 Mar. 1732/3, T. Gibbons, *Memoirs of the Rev. Isaac Watts*, p. 358, London, 1780.

and the blessed fruits of it were to be laid aside, he could not see that the name of Christian signified much'. On this account he regretted that the publication had been anonymous and thereby deprived of the weight which the author's name would have given to it. For 'to deal clearly with you', he continued, 'I have thought for some time that those doctrines and others of the same kind have received a grievous wound from the indifference about them (to say no worse) which some Dissenters have discovered of late'; and he added the caution that he did not think due care had yet been taken 'to satisfy the world that notwithstanding the defection of some Dissenters, there were many among them and those of great note, who were not in the least tainted with the modern notions, but adhered stedfastly to the true doctrines of the Gospel, as delivered to us by Christ and His Apostles'.[1] Under the influence of this correspondence, Gibson became very affectionately disposed towards Watts, encouraging him to publish all his writings for the service of religion, and to take care to preserve his health so that he might live long to continue his work.

The interesting question is raised by these considerations as to whether if Gibson had taken up a more conciliatory attitude towards Dissenters, he might not have carried through some scheme of comprehension which would have brought the majority of their moderate supporters within the fold of the Church. Certainly his situation encouraged such a venture. He was well disposed towards Nonconformity as a political force on the side of the Whigs, and he was anxious both to strengthen the Whig party within the Church in order to counterbalance the Tory preponderance, and to fuse the Lay and Church Whigs into a united body. It is probable that a comprehension acceptable to moderate Churchmen and Dissenters, based upon orthodoxy of belief and liberty in the matter of 'nocent ceremonies', would have been welcome both to Walpole and Gibson, and at this time there would have been no reason to dread the voice of Convocation.

Other influences seemed to point in the same direction. The

[1] Gibson to Watts, 19 Jan. 1735/6, T. Gibbons, *Memoirs of the Rev. Isaac Watts*, p. 359.

idea of 'Comprehension' still haunted the minds of many churchmen, despite the failure of the attempt to realize it at the Revolution. Bishop Hough, who had lived through all the conflicts since the accession of James II, was continually urging upon Gibson the necessity of conciliation. He could not accept Gibson's rigid conservatism because he did not think 'any human establishment so sacred that nothing might be touched or altered in it'. Nor could he regard the Toleration Act as sacrosanct; on the contrary it was only a temporary and imperfect measure of pacification, intended as the precursor of greater concessions to the Dissenters.

'Was such a liberty indulged with a design of keeping them in a state of separation?' he wrote, 'was it not struggled for chiefly as means of calming their spirits, that had been exasperated by ill usage; and bringing them impartially to consider how groundless and unreasonable the greatest part of their scruples and prejudices were; how dangerous their continuance in schism was to all the Reformed Churches, as well as to that of England, and how much it was their interest as well as ours to compromise and adjust matters amicably?'

Whatever might be the present attitude of Dissenters, it was the duty of the Church to make an offer of terms and to take the first step in a spirit of charity and peace. Then, 'if they, notwithstanding, will reject everything that we can honestly comply with them in, the fault must lye at their door, and we shall have acquitted ourselves in the sight of God and Man. But so long as we can fairly make any further step towards them and refuse to do it, we shall have nothing to reply to those who reproach us for not doing all that . . . becomes us, to close our divisions.'[1]

These considerations were supported by others of a more practical nature. The Church was being attacked on all sides and was steadily losing ground. The Deists were penetrating into the very citadel of revelation: the Papists were directing the force of their attacks against the National Church, ignoring the various Dissenting bodies; and the general temper of

[1] Bishop of Worcester to Gibson, 14 June 1735, Gibson MSS. vii. 26.

scepticism and immorality was detaching many of those who had adhered to it outwardly in former times. Yet the Dissenters stood in close relation to the Church, divided from it by minor differences of organization, but standing for the chief principles of the Protestant Reformation and affording a field of activity 'where success was not to be despaired of'. 'In temporal affairs', Hough wrote, 'princes can lay aside their prejudices, their passions and even their principles, to strengthen themselves against a potent enemy; and if this wisdom of the serpent cannot take place in religious concerns so far as the innocency of the dove will admit, 'tis a sign that we are destined to ruin and must inevitably dwindle away.'[1] There can be little doubt that these sentiments represented a strong body of opinion within the Church. From the side of Nonconformity also the situation presented several hopeful features. The Dissenters were not in an aggressive humour. They were feeling the effects of the exhausting struggle for existence from which they had recently emerged. Nor were they hostile to the principle of an Established Church. The Scheme of Comprehension, which had been proposed in 1689, had been expected to bring in, on the prophecy of Calamy, two-thirds of their numbers.[2] The *rapprochement* which was subsequently attempted between Presbyterians and Congregationalists by the 'Heads of Agreement', showed that the Independents had relaxed their grip of certain of their original principles. In 1739 also Dr. Isaac Watts wrote to Bishop Gibson that if the Anglican clergy were zealous pastors 'there would be no Dissenters in many parishes in England where now they abound. It was not the differences of ordination and ceremony, no, nor the imposition of them without warrant, that were so well understood as to create a large separation on those accounts merely'.[3] Even so late as the middle of the century Dr. Samuel Chandler discussed the possibility of Comprehension with Bishops Gooch and Sherlock and with the Archbishop of Canterbury, Herring, who cordially approved the idea

[1] Hough to Gibson, 27 Aug. 1735, vii. 27.
[2] Calamy, *Abridgement of Baxter's Life*, i. 448.
[3] Dr. Watts to Bp. Gibson, 15 Aug. 1739, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Isaac Watts, D.D.*, London, 1806, p. 96, Godw. Pamph., Bodl. 609.

and believed that to be 'a proper time to make the attempt'.[1]

On the other hand, the opportunity must be seized forthwith, or it would pass away. If the settlement of 1719, when the Occasional Conformity and Schism Acts were repealed, were to be considered as final, it was impossible to prevent a great widening of the breach between the Church and Dissent. The erection of more and more meeting houses, the establishment of a regular ministry and organization, above all, the exclusion of Nonconformity from the Universities, and from all familiar movement in Anglican religious circles, were creating a social cleavage far more profound than the religious or political differences. For the present also the decline of spiritual fervour tended to discourage bold attempts towards reform and union, and the energies of Dissenters were largely occupied in the controversies concerning subscription within their own communities. Nevertheless, though the situation presented doubtful as well as promising features, the vigorous personality of Gibson might have effected something if he had been zealous for Comprehension. But his attitude of unyielding rigidity was unfavourable towards the possibility. The apprehension with which he regarded the attacks of Deism, inclined him to take too dismal a view of the weakness of the Establishment and the power of its enemies. He asserted that 'in his situation he saw and felt a great deal', which was hidden from ordinary persons, and that he had good ground for his terror lest an unholy alliance of Deists, Nonconformists, and free-livers should destroy the entire fabric of religion in England.[2] On the whole his conclusions do not seem to be justified by the evidence, but rather to proceed from his vivid imagination and zeal for the welfare of the Church. The general impression of the period is that Nonconformity was not a dangerous aggressive force. If it had been, it is difficult to understand why its attempts to secure 'the Repeals' were so sporadic, and evanescent, and why they failed so decisively to attain their

[1] Stoughton, *History of Religion in England*, vol. vi, *The Church in the Georgian Era*, p. 18.

[2] Gibson to Bp. Hough, 1735, Gibson MSS. vii. 25.

object. 'Surveying all the evidence—both the direct evidence pointing to declension and the indirect evidence afforded by the efforts of men who were doing their best to set right times spiritually so out of joint—we can reach no other verdict than that among Nonconformists of every order religion had lost its inspiring power.' [1]

One of the chief reasons which prompted Bishop Hough's advocacy of a closer alliance between the Church and Dissent was the danger to both from their common enemy, the Papists. The three generations of Englishmen who lived during the century after the Revolution, had a deep and continual fear of Roman Catholic aggression. The misguided policy of James II had proved far more dangerous to his friends than to his enemies, for it had identified them with his attempts to establish a political tyranny. After the triumph of the Revolution, a Papist was *ipso facto* a supporter of the Pretender and a traitor to the reigning king. Therefore, during the half century of political uncertainty and disquietude which witnessed the High Tory reaction of Anne's reign, the imminent danger of a Legitimist Restoration, and the chronic instability of the Hanoverian dynasty, it was inevitable that Roman Catholics should be the object of fear and suspicion. Their lot during the reigns of George I and II was one of great difficulty and hardship. It was not, however, characterized by severe persecution. Apart from the executions for high treason which followed upon the open rebellions of 1715 and 1745, the death penalty was not exacted, nor were actual prosecutions at all numerous. The Penal Code rather hung over the heads of Roman Catholics as a Damocles' sword, so that 'the constant dread of its enforcement was an ever present terror'.[2] From the religious point of view, Roman Catholicism was at its nadir in England. The records of Catholic life during the eighteenth century are of the scantiest and most meagre description. But the one certain fact which does emerge from them is that 'Catholic congregations, small as they were, were steadily

[1] Clark, *History of English Nonconformity*, ii, p. 200.
[2] E. H. Burton, *Life and Times of Bishop Challoner* (*1691–1781*), London, 1909, 2 vols., i, p. 67.

shrinking '.[1] They depended for their support almost entirely upon the great Catholic families, around whose country seats there gathered a small body of servants and worshippers. Thus Lord Petre alone supported five missions in Essex, and Lord Teynham was 'the chief support of religion in Kent '.[2] With the exception of the priests attached to the chapels of foreign embassies in London, the entire clergy consisted of the domestic chaplains of the Roman Catholic nobles. They celebrated mass in the privacy of their master's house, and exercised a pastoral supervision over the small community which gathered round it. But even these sources of supply were steadily diminishing. The rebellions of 1715 and 1745 each removed a few leaders of the cause, whose decease was followed by the extinction of the missions they had supported. Several noble families, galled by the restrictions placed upon them, quietly apostasized and conformed to the National Church. The loss of such stalwart households as the Gages, the Shelleys, and the Ropers was a severe blow to the cause of Roman Catholicism. The lot of the clergy, however, was much worse than that of the laity. In most cases they were entirely dependent upon their patron, and had to occupy a humble position in his establishment, performing even the offices of servants. They dared not appear in clerical dress, nor perform their religious rites in public. Generally the life of the priest was one of continuous secrecy and concealment, 'disguised as a layman, living obscurely, fathering the faithful round him for a hidden mass, for surreptitious instruction or for the administration of the sacraments.'[3]

The Roman bishops and vicars apostolic, too, were compelled to adopt a disguise. Bishop Challenor was consecrated in the convent at Hammersmith amid circumstances of strictest secrecy, both bishops and priests assuming their sacerdotal vestments in the privity of the chapel, and emerging into the outer world in the garb of country gentlemen. His own confirmations were conducted with every precaution and the numbers who assembled to receive the grace were small, lest

[1] Burton, *Life and Times of Bishop Challenor*, i, p. 158.
[2] Ibid., p. 142. [3] Ibid., p. 69.

the spectacle of a large assembly should arouse suspicion. Religious services were held in attics, generally in obscure public houses, where bodies of men might resort without attracting attention. The doors were bolted and strongly guarded, and admission was secured by the repetition of a password. It is recorded that Bishop Challenor once preached to a congregation in 'The Ship' in Little Turnstile, near Lincoln's Inn Fields, each member of which was 'sitting with a pot of beer before him so as to afford a pretext for the gathering in case of interruption'.[1] Only in London was it possible to celebrate mass publicly, and this in the chapels attached to the six Catholic embassies, the Imperial embassy in Hanover Square, the Portuguese in Golden Square, the French in Greek Street, Soho, the Spanish in Ormond Street, North Holborn, the Venetian in Suffolk Street, near Haymarket, and most important of all, the Sardinian in Lincoln's Inn Fields

It is necessary to consider these facts in order to appreciate the actual conditions under which Roman Catholics were living, before pointing out that in practice they enjoyed a far greater degree of liberty than might be supposed from the legal restrictions which still hedged them round. A government, determined to execute the laws technically in force against them, could have speedily reduced them to such circumstances of distress, as would make their present lot seem peaceful and undisturbed. Legally, the Roman Catholic laity, in addition

[1] Burton, *Life and Times of Bishop Challenor*, i. p. 138. Cf. Gibson's Notes on Papists in the diocese of London and his references to Challenor:

'At the sign of the Ship, call'd the Royal Ann, in Whetston Park, between Holborn and Lincoln's Inn fields, one Chaloner, who lives with a lady in Queen's Square, preaches, it is said, on Sundays to men only and on Thursdays to women only.'

'Hammersmith. There has been, almost time out of mind, a Boarding School for Papists kept at Hammersmith, to which Priests also are known to resort for the performing of the Service; and it is said that they are now enlarging their house.'

'Mr. Chaloner, a priest, at Mrs. Briant's in Devonshire Street.'

'At the Royal Ann, in Weston's Park, near Mrs. Adlum, Chaloner preaches in English on Sundays and Thursdays.'

These references, taken from Gibson MSS. i. 48, show the secrecy with which Roman Catholic services were conducted; they suggest that *possibly* Gibson did not know that Challenor was a bishop.

to being cut off from public life and excluded from Parliament, could be narrowly limited in their private activities. They were incapable of inheriting land, so that their estates passed to the Protestant next of kin, if he chose to dispossess them ;[1] they were unable to purchase land and required to pay a double land tax on such real property as they did actually possess ; they were forbidden to keep arms and liable to be deprived of any horse above the value of £5 ;[2] they were incapable of holding any office in the army or navy,[3] or practising as barristers, doctors, or schoolmasters ;[4] they could not send their children to be educated abroad without a fine,[5] and they were bound to register their names and estates under penalty of forfeiture.[6] The lot of the clergy was even worse. Their very presence in the kingdom was an act of high treason,[7] and if they were convicted of exercising their sacerdotal functions they might be sentenced to imprisonment for life.[8] To convert any person to the Church of Rome was an offence punishable as high treason.[9] Thus the possibilities of persecution were almost unlimited. But to estimate the real circumstances of Roman Catholics, and to understand the problem rightly it should be remembered that, although the laws stood upon the statute book they were rarely enforced. Nevertheless the position of Roman Catholics was uncomfortable and precarious in the highest degree, and it is true to say that never had their hopes been so low nor their fortunes so hard as during the reigns of the first two Hanoverians.

Bishop Gibson was exceeded by none in his antipathy to everything that savoured of Popery, and in his zealous watchfulness over the activities of Papists. He believed that it was by little short of a miracle that England had been delivered in 1689 and at the death of Anne from the plots of Papists to destroy its liberties ; and it was to their machinations that he ascribed the rebellion of 1715, 'engaged in vigorously by Papists at home, supported liberally by Papists abroad, and carried on by a strange combination of Protestants and Papists

[1] 11 and 12 Wm. III, c. 4. [2] 1 Wm. and M., st. i, c. 15.
[3] 25 Car. II, c. 2. [4] 7 and 8 Wm. III, c. 24 ; 12 Anne, st. 2, c. 7.
[5] 11 and 12 Wm. III, c. 4. [6] 1 Geo. I, st. 2, i, c. 55.
[7] 27 Eliz., c. 2. [8] 11 and 12 Wm. III, c. 14. [9] 23 Eliz., c. 1.

to establish Popery and preserve the Church.'[1] The panic created by this rebellion resulted in the passing of legislation against the Catholics. The ringleaders of revolt were executed, and an Act was passed (1 Geo. I. c. 50) ' to enquire of the estates of certain traitors and Popish recusants and of estates given to superstitious uses, in order to raise money out of their security for the use of the public '. After the passing of the danger, however, no further measures of vengeance were taken and the suspects were allowed to remain unmolested, if they would live quietly. The problem of the existence and propagation of Popery, however, continued to perplex the mind of Gibson, especially after his promotion to the see of London. There could be no doubt that Papists were strongest in London, where their numbers are estimated at about 20,000 in the year 1730.[2]

Gibson could never quite harmonize his fundamental conviction that Popery was incompatible with the safety of the Protestant Succession and the National Church, with the ideas of toleration which the Revolution principles had forced upon him. He realized that fire and faggot were not ' a fit application to the consciences of Christians ' nor ' the destruction of their bodies a fit means for the salvation of their souls '. On the other hand, he was convinced that Roman Catholics were at war with the present government and religion of England, because they ' disowned the title of the Prince in favour of a Pretender of their own religion ' and owed a primary allegiance ' to a superior head, who claimed a power of absolving subjects from their allegiance and even degrading and excommunicating the sovereign '.[3] Also they were bound in conscience to endeavour the destruction of the Establishment, and recent examples of their persecuting spirit had been given by the activities of James II in England, and of Louis XIV in France.

[1] Gibson, ' The Deliverances and Murmurings of the Israelites and these nations compared ; A Sermon preached before the House of Lords on June 7th, 1716, being the Day of Publick Thanksgiving for the blessing of God upon His Majesty's Arms in suppressing the late unnatural rebellion ', London, 1716.

[2] Burton, *Life and Times of Bishop Challenor*, i, p. 77.

[3] Gibson, ' A Sermon on the Growth and Mischiefs of Popery,' preached at the Assizes held at Kingston 5th Sept. 1706, and reprinted in 1731.

Indeed, Gibson had convinced himself by a survey of the Penal Laws from Henry VIII to the Revolution that ' by comparing the seditious practices of Papists with the several laws they had occasioned, it would appear at one view that the Papists had been the sole authors of their own misfortunes '. Accordingly, he arrived at the characteristic compromise : that Roman Catholics should be tolerated so long as they lived quietly and obscurely, but that all aggressive action on their part should be suppressed, and if they transgressed the bounds of civil obedience then the State must deal with them as promoters of sedition. He thought that the full severities of the laws against the mere presence of priests in England, the saying and hearing mass privately, the confining lay Catholics to certain places of abode, and the preventing them from sending their children to seminaries abroad, should not be put into execution at this period. But he wished the statutes to be enforced in cases of Mass houses to which ' the resort was open and public ', against Popish bishops who were exercising their functions and rendering themselves liable to imprisonment for life, against foreign ambassadors who not only maintained chaplains of English or Irish extraction, but entertained a number greatly in excess of that required for the services of their chapel, and against any Papist who established a school in England. Even in the case of the laws which prescribed the penalty of death for the actual presence of a priest in this country or the discovery of his conversion of a Protestant to Rome, it would be advisable, instead of allowing them to become entirely obsolete, to reduce the penalty and so enforce them with a view ' to restrain the immoderate number ' of clergy who were flocking into England from abroad, and to prevent their making proselytes ' every day and almost everywhere '.[1]

Though little was done in the way of action by the Government, Gibson maintained his vigilance, making a survey of the Popish Mass houses in his diocese, and being particularly concerned by the daily resort of a considerable number of Catholics to the masses which were celebrated in the house of

[1] Ibid., ' Laws against Papists ', MS. notes, Gibson MSS. vii. 34.

the Spanish Ambassador in Ormond Street, and the chapel of the Sardinian Embassy in Lincoln's Inn Fields. He noted also the firm establishment of 'a Boarding School for Papists at Hammersmith, to which priests were known to resort for the performing of the Service', and which the founders were hoping to enlarge.[1] After a period of quiescence the agitation against Roman Catholics revived. After the elections of 1734 Gibson wrote to the Queen pressing upon her attention the serious increase of Popery, in which 'besides the mischief to religion and the souls of men, every convert to Popery was a convert to the Pretender', and suggesting that the new Parliament should consider the matter.[2] In the session of 1736, an order was made by Parliament that the bishops should inquire into the state of Popery in their dioceses and present a report, which the Bishop of London did. He found the state of things in the city to correspond with the outline previously sketched, and, in the rural parts of his diocese, concluded that there was no evidence of 'any remarkable progress'.[3] Bishop Challenor in the same year, being charged with disaffection by an anti-Roman controversialist, deemed it prudent to withdraw to Douay in order to avoid the possibility of a legal inquiry.[4] Gibson began to canvass a proposal of his own 'for reprinting by subscription the most considerable tracts against Popery that were written in and about King James II's time',[5] and succeeded in carrying out the scheme in 1738. when his *Preservative against Popery* appeared in three folio volumes.

But it was not until the crisis of the War of the Austrian Succession arose that the situation became acute. The hostility of England and France was bound to result in French attempts to foment a Jacobite insurrection, and it was inevitable that Roman Catholics should be involved. The first plan which the French formed, for an invasion of England by an army of 15,000 men, was defeated by a storm which wrecked

[1] Gibson, 'Notes on the State of Popery', Gibson MSS. i. 48.
[2] Bp. Gibson to the Queen, n.d., ibid., vii. 27.
[3] Gibson to the Duke of Newcastle, 2nd March 1736/7, B.M. Add. MSS. 32690, f. 257.
[4] Burton, *Life and Times of Bishop Challenor*, i, p. 105.
[5] Bp. Secker to Bp. Berkeley, Fraser, *Life and Letters of Berkeley*, iv, p. 235.

the transports, but none the less the Young Pretender resolved to embark upon his forlorn enterprise. The excitement in London was intense. Bishop Gibson led his clergy to present a loyal address to the throne, published a pastoral letter exhorting his people to repentance and prayer, and had a long correspondence with the Ministers of State concerning the directions which should be sent to the parish clergy, instructing them to preach against Popery and in favour of the present Administration. In his pastoral letter he bade all citizens both to use 'the best human means' of defence, and to devote themselves earnestly to prayer individually, in families, and collectively at public worship; supplicating that God would avert the terrible calamity of the suppression of 'the pure light of the Gospel', by the emissaries of superstition and darkness.[1] Meanwhile the successes of Charles Stuart in Scotland, the news of the battle of Prestonpans, and the almost triumphant march through the North and Midland counties, created a feeling of panic in London. Horace Walpole has recorded that on the night of the 21st October, 'information was given of an intended insurrection and massacre by the Papists; all the guards were ordered out and the Tower shut up at seven.' A plague of murrain among cows was at first ascribed to the action of Papists in poisoning the wells, and it was generally reported that they were sending large contributions to the Pretender's army. In the same spirit of panic and desperate anxiety to defeat the enemy, Gibson wrote to the Duke of Newcastle declaring his fears 'that London and Westminster were far more full of foreign Papists than was usually imagined, and that there were proportionate quantities of arms laid up for such a juncture', suggesting that the chief haunts of Catholics might be searched by Government spies.[2] Examples of their meetings were furnished by the suspicious 'resort of priests to a fishmonger's in Newport Alley, next door

[1] Gibson, 'Pastoral Letter to the People of his diocese, occasioned by the present dangers and exciting to a serious Reformation of Life and Manners; with a postscript setting forth the dangers and mischiefs of Popery', London, 1745.

[2] Gibson to the Duke of Newcastle, 28 Sept. 1745, S. P. Dom. Geo. II, B. 69, P. R. O.

to the Crown alehouse',[1] and the private information which he had received of an invitation to 'persons who were disposed to learn the military exercises . . . to a large room assigned for that purpose at the Crown Tavern in King Street, Westminster'.[2]

Amid such apprehensions, the Ministry had to stick to their guns until the welcome news came that the invader had been compelled to turn his face northwards and retrace his steps. After this the issue was no longer in doubt, nor much delayed. The Roman Catholics had not been partakers in the rebellion in any large numbers. 'It is true that some Catholics of the Northern counties were found in the invading army and a very few in the South were inclined to rush upon the same inevitable ruin, though it is certain that the most learned and pious divines which the body afforded, and Bishop Challenor in particular endeavoured to dissuade them from the attempt.'[3] Challenor indeed thought that his co-religionists had 'behaved remarkably well' in their difficult situation.[4] Nevertheless, they could not avoid being implicated in the rebellion, and during its course various disciplinary measures were exercised against them. Their houses were frequently entered, upon pretence of searching for arms, their horses were taken away from them, they were forbidden to reside within ten miles of the cities of London and Westminster, and above all their schools and chapels, which had formerly been winked at, were now everywhere shut up, even the Embassy chapels being closed with the exception of that of the Bavarian ambassador.[5] After the suppression of the rising the leading conspirators were executed and the gaols were full of Roman Catholics who had joined or helped in the rebellion. Beyond this the Government did not go, and no fresh legislation was enacted against them. One of the most important results from their point of view was the suppression of the only Catholic school in the South, at Twyford, near Winchester, where Alexander Pope had spent his earliest school days, and which, having been closed during

[1] Gibson to Duke of Newcastle, 16 Dec., ibid., B. 77.
[2] Same to same, Jan. 1745/6, ibid., B. 80.
[3] Milner, 'Life of Dr. Challenor', quoted in Burton, *Life and Times of Bishop Challenor*, i, p. 237.
[4] Ibid., p. 238. [5] Ibid., p. 240.

the actual panic of the invasion, was never reopened. On the whole, however, with the defeat of the Young Pretender the danger from the political designs of Roman Catholics was at an end, so that gradually they 'settled down into the same state in which they had been before the rising, their waning allegiance to the House of Stuart being transferred slowly and imperceptibly, yet very surely, to the Hanoverian dynasty'.[1] From the point of view of numerical strength their decline continued. Bishop Challenor's Visitation of 1749 showed, by comparison with his first, that 'though there was here and there an occasional increase of numbers, the general diminution both of missions and people steadily continued'.[2] Despite the comparative insignificance of the Roman Catholic host, Bishop Gibson thought it necessary to maintain a vigorous propaganda against the tenets of their faith. In one of his Commonplace Books he has left a remarkable monument of his industry and of his militant Protestantism, by his careful and meticulous analysis of the various points of doctrine and discipline on which the Church of England had parted from Rome. So also his *Preservative against Popery*, which included all the discourses preached on that subject during the reign of James II, formed a learned and thorough exposition of the Anglican doctrine, both of government and of faith. The interest of both is now historical and antiquarian, for they look back to the time when the conflict with Rome was a vital issue in political and theological controversy.

The most important religious movement of the century, the Methodist revival, did not attain a wide influence until the last decade of Gibson's life. In many respects it set itself to accomplish those ends which he had tried to realize by different means. It supplied a corrective to the tendency to regard Christianity only as a system of morality by its vigorous preaching of the need of conversion; it rescued many of the lower classes from a life of vice and degradation, and transformed them into citizens of virtue and piety; it turned religious aspiration away from the controversies associated with Deism into the new channel of striving after personal

[1] Ibid., p. 244.

[2] Ibid., p. 295.

holiness. At first Gibson was well disposed towards the founders of the movement; but although the story of his relations with them is necessarily inconclusive, since he himself died more than forty years before John Wesley, the evidence shows that a feeling of hostility was replacing his original sympathy and that the differences between them were increasing.

It is not necessary here to recapitulate the familiar story of the early life and training of the Wesley brothers, nor to describe in detail the Methodist club which they formed in Oxford, and into the circle of which was drawn George Whitefield, who was destined to become the greatest pulpit orator in England. Reference will also be made in another place to the work which both Wesley and Whitefield accomplished in America, and it will suffice here to mention the fact that at the time of his visit to Georgia, John Wesley was imbued with rigid High Church opinions, so that he rebaptized infants who had been baptized by Dissenters, repelled from the Communion a man of virtuous life because he happened to be a Nonconformist, and refused to read the burial service over the body of a Dissenter. After his return to England in 1738 he joined himself to the Moravian Society in Fetter Lane, and was greatly troubled because, although he had been converted, he did not possess that full assurance of faith which the Moravians asserted must be the necessary concomitant of true conversion. Accordingly, he travelled in Germany to visit their chief settlement at Herrnhuth, and to converse with the leaders there. It was on his return to England that he and his brother had their first interview with the Bishop of London. Already John Wesley by his fervent preaching of the doctrines of justification by faith and of the necessity of experiencing a full inward assurance of salvation, had created a sensation in the capital, so that many of its churches were closed against him. Accordingly, on the 21st October 1738, Gibson sent for the two brothers 'to answer the complaints he had heard against them that they preached an absolute assurance of salvation'. He allowed that if by 'assurance' they meant 'an inward persuasion whereby a man is conscious in himself, after examining

his life by the law of God and weighing his own sincerity, that he is in a state of salvation and acceptable to God', then he did not see how any good Christian could be without this. They answered that this was what they contended for, but they had been 'charged as Antinomians for preaching justification by faith only'; and they inquired 'if anyone could preach otherwise who adhered to the Church and the Scriptures', though they admitted that 'by preaching it strongly and not inculcating good works, many had been made Antinomians in theory, though not in practice, especially in King Charles' time'. The Bishop replied by drawing to their notice a heavy charge which they had brought upon the bishops 'by bringing the Archbishop's authority for re-baptizing an adult'. John Wesley said that he had expressly disowned the statement concerning the Archbishop, but that 'if a person dissatisfied with lay baptism should desire episcopal, he would think it his duty to administer it, after having acquainted the Bishop according to the Canon'. Gibson told them that he did not approve of rebaptism, and was then asked by John Wesley 'whether his reading in a Religious Society made it a Conventicle'; but he replied in a non-committal manner, warily referring his interrogator to the laws. When he was definitely pressed to say 'whether the Religious Societies were Conventicles', he again refused to commit himself, answering, 'No, I think not; however, you can read the acts and laws as well as I: I determine nothing.' Finally, he consented not to receive 'any accusation against a Presbyter but at the mouth of two or three witnesses', and promised the brothers that they should have free access to him at all times.[1]

This account of the first interview between Gibson and the Wesleys shows that he was kindly disposed towards them, and unwilling to place any merely formal obstacle in their way. By comparison with the High Church doctrines of John Wesley, also, he appears in the light of a liberal and broad-minded divine. It is curious that the rigid notions of the Wesleys should have been the chief subjects of conversation at the first interviews. For Charles Wesley, taking advantage

[1] T. Jackson, *The Journal of Charles Wesley*, London, 1849, vol. i, p. 133.

of the privilege of free access to his lordship, called upon him on the 14th November to discuss the question of rebaptism again. Gibson had a deep-rooted objection to the practice of rebaptizing converts who had received the rite at the hands of Dissenting ministers. The problem of lay baptism had been raised during the Convocation controversy by the rebellious clergy, but the bishops had refused to be drawn into the snare and had acknowledged the validity of the practice by refusing to order that persons so baptized should submit themselves again to the ceremony. Consequently, when Charles Wesley informed Gibson that he had been requested to baptize a woman who was 'not satisfied with her baptism by a Dissenter, saying that sure and unsure were not the same', the Bishop 'immediately took fire', retorting 'I wholly disapprove of it: it is irregular'. He also objected that the information of intention to take such action could only come regularly from the minister of the parish, and asked, 'Who gave you authority to baptize'? Charles replied he possessed that authority by his ordination and would exercise it 'in any part of the known world', but his lordship reminded him that 'no man could exercise parochial duty in London without his leave; it was only *sub silentio*'; and added that 'it was one thing to connive and another to approve'. Episcopal caution reasserted itself, and Gibson refused either to inhibit or to approve, imploring the young man not to 'push things to an extreme'. Then after further discussion of this question of lay baptism, of the danger of Antinomianism on the part of the Methodists, and of rationalism on that of Archbishop Tillotson, the Bishop dismissed him with the words, 'Well, Sir, you knew my judgement before and you know it now. Good morrow to you.'[1]

There was much wisdom as well as caution in Gibson's desire to keep clear of controversy on the matter of lay baptism, and to avoid pushing things to an extreme or giving an authoritative decision. He was ready to allow some latitude to the Methodists if they could do good works, and was prepared to wink at irregularities, if they would not bring these minor points to his notice and would restrain their enthusiasm within moderate

[1] T. Jackson, *The Journal of Charles Wesley*, London, 1849, vol. i, p. 135.

bounds. Meanwhile, the evangelistic campaign was being carried on vigorously, and dangerous innovations were being attempted. The clergy were becoming increasingly alienated from the Methodist preachers, and 'by the close of the year 1738 Wesley was almost uniformly excluded from the pulpits of the Established Church'.[1] Faced by this general inhibition also, Whitefield in February of the following year turned to open-air preaching, delivering his first discourse to two hundred colliers at Kingswood. It was an important step, and its success ensured its repetition. A feeling of consternation and alarm was already arising in the hearts of churchmen, when the Wesley brothers had a further interview with Gibson on the 21st February 1739. Before visiting him, they had been received by Archbishop Potter, who had dealt very kindly with them and exhorted them 'to give no more umbrage than was necessary for their own defence'. The Bishop of London in his eagerness to smooth over difficulties, despite the interest and alarm which recent events had aroused, 'denied his having condemned or even heard much of them.' He detected the taint of Antinomianism in Whitefield's *Journal*, however, 'though he himself was a pious, well-meaning youth', and accordingly, 'he warned them against Antinomianism and dismissed them kindly.'[2] It is evident from the manner in which Gibson received them, and from his careful avoidance of disputable subjects that he wished to help forward rather than to hinder their work.

During the course of the year 1739 the situation became more acute. During the first three months John Wesley only preached six sermons in church pulpits, and he was now practically excluded from the London churches. Whitefield had already extended his practice of open air preaching by addressing great crowds on Moorfields and Kennington Common before he set sail for America in the month of August, and after his departure, Wesley carried on the work. Wesley began also to entertain larger notions of the sphere of his missionary enterprise. To a friend who urged him to accept

[1] Tyerman, *Life of John Wesley*, London, 1870, i, p. 224.
[2] T. Jackson, *The Journal of Charles Wesley*, i, p. 143.

a living and settle down in one particular locality he wrote, 'I look upon all the world as my parish; thus far I mean, that in whatever part of it I am, I judge it meet, right and my bounden duty to declare unto all that are willing to hear the glad tidings of salvation.'[1] As a further consequence of his exclusion from church pulpits, he was compelled to establish special chapels for the holding of Methodist services. At first, indeed, he had no design that they should oppose or replace the churches, but the decisive step taken in 1739 of opening a meeting house at Bristol, and at the Foundery at Moorfields in London, was of profound significance for the future of the movement.

'From this time the leaders of the movement became the most active of missionaries. Without any fixed parishes they wandered from place to place, proclaiming their new doctrine in every pulpit to which they were admitted, and they speedily awoke a passionate enthusiasm and a bitter hostility in the Church. Nothing indeed could appear more irregular to the ordinary parochial clergyman than those itinerant ministers who broke violently away from the settled habits of their profession, who belonged to and worshipped in small religious societies that bore a suspicious resemblance to conventicles, and whose whole tone and manner of preaching were utterly unlike anything to which he was accustomed. . . . The Methodist preacher came to an Anglican parish in the spirit and with the language of a missionary going to the most ignorant heathens; and he asked the clergyman for the use of his pulpit in order that he might instruct the parishioners—perhaps for the first time—in the true Gospel of Christ. It is not surprising that the clergy should have resented such a movement and the manner of the missionary was as startling as his matter. . . . The love of order, routine, and decorum, which was the strongest feeling in the clerical mind, was violently shocked. The regular congregation was displaced by an agitated throng, who had never before been seen within the precincts of the Church. The usual quiet worship was disturbed by violent enthusiasm or violent opposition, by hysterical paroxysms of devotion or remorse, and when the preacher had left the parish, he seldom failed to leave behind him the elements of agitation and division.'[2]

[1] Tyerman, *Life of John Wesley*, i, p. 235.
[2] Lecky, *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, ii, pp. 560–1.

In these circumstances Bishop Gibson could not remain a passive spectator, so on the 1st August 1739, he issued a pastoral letter to the people of his diocese ' by way of caution against lukewarmness on the one hand and enthusiasm on the other'. Three prominent features characterize this pamphlet; first the religious zeal which inspired the warnings against lukewarmness, secondly, the careful study Gibson had given to the Methodist publications, of which the copious quotations from Whitefield's *Journal* are sufficient example, and thirdly, his extreme caution to avoid a condemnation of the movement as a whole, whilst correcting its unrestrained enthusiasm. His intention was to show that ' true Christianity lies in the middle way ' between the extremes of indifference and eccentricity.

In the first part of the pastoral, he inveighed against the prevalent errors which made men content with a very moderate degree of religion, without attempting to advance far in its practice. Passing then to the more important matter, he ascribed the present religious confusion to the failure on the part of the Methodists ' to distinguish aright between the ordinary and extraordinary operations of the Holy Spirit ', defining the latter as being those gifts which were given to the Apostles for the particular end of working miracles and speaking with tongues in order to accomplish the task of first planting the new Gospel in a pagan world. With the fulfilment of their purpose, these gifts had ceased, and though the Holy Spirit continued to guide and inspire men, as was testified by the Office of Confirmation and many Collects in the Book of Common Prayer, nevertheless its operations were effected ' in a different manner, and for ends and uses of a more private nature '.

Gibson next formulated a series of charges against the Methodists; that they claimed to have extraordinary communications with God, and more than ordinary assurances of a special presence with them; that they spoke as if they had received a special and immediate mission from God, and professed to think and act under the immediate guidance of a divine inspiration; that they boasted of sudden and

surprising effects as wrought by the Holy Ghost in consequence of their preaching; that they regarded themselves in the character of Apostles of Christ, striving to plant and propagate a new Gospel, as unknown to the generality of ministers and people in a Christian country; and that in order to justify their own extraordinary methods of teaching, they cast unworthy reflections on the parochial clergy as deficient in the discharge of their duty, and not instructing their people in the true doctrines of Christianity. These objections were supported and illustrated by a collection of no fewer than ninety passages from Whitefield's *Journals*, most of which, the Bishop argued, must be regarded as merely enthusiastic unless supported by 'proofs of an extraordinary commission from God'.

With regard to the slanders which were cast upon the parochial clergy, Gibson thought they should have been 'laid with greater degrees of caution and restriction', unless their authors were really so foolish as to believe 'that itinerant preaching to confused multitudes was a more effectual way to preserve religion than a parochial establishment and a settled ministry'. In any case, the remedy was in the hands of the clergy themselves, who by sound preaching and sober living could disprove the accusations of their enemies. Gibson, therefore, repeated his previous declarations concerning the necessity of delivering doctrinal sermons, not mere moral discourses, and warned the laity that regeneration was not an instantaneous act, 'inwardly felt at the very time,' nor was the test of salvation 'any sudden and extraordinary impulses and influences', but the actual disposition of the heart, and the steady progress which should be made in grace and goodness. He pointed out, in particular, the danger arising from the institution of lay preachers, for it encouraged men 'to set up for publick expounders of Scripture without a competent share of acquired knowledge and ability for the work'; and the results of 'inspired tongues and itching ears' had been seen in the chaos and uncertainty of the Commonwealth period.[1]

[1] Gibson, 'Pastoral Letter to the People of his diocese, by way of caution against Lukewarmness on the one hand and Enthusiasm on the other', 1 Aug. 1739.

There was a considerable degree of justification for Gibson's rebukes. The general style of Whitefield's diary was certainly bombastic and strained, and though the particular references could be quite naturally explained without implying any claim to extraordinary supernatural communications with God, they were expressed in language too fantastic and unrestrained. It was natural, too, that a bishop should view with apprehension the disregard of boundaries, both diocesan and parochial, by the itinerant Methodist preachers. Nevertheless, the tone of the pastoral was one of studied moderation. The biographer of John Wesley describes it as ' a model of meek writing ',[1] and it is evident that the author did not wish to say anything to aggravate the difficulties of the situation. From several quarters there came messages of approval. Bishop Hough thought it an ' incomparable pastoral letter . . . written with a spirit truly Christian, with judgement superior to cavil or criticism, and every way adequate to the charitable design of bringing those whose regulation was aimed at, to serious reflection '. For his own part also he ' would fain believe that they meant well, and that nothing worse than heat and imprudence had occasioned their excesses ', though he regretted their pride and hard censure, ' the inseparable companion of bigotry ', which might develop into dangerous fanaticism.[2] On the other side, Dr. Isaac Watts, to whom Gibson sent a copy of his pastoral, found himself in hearty agreement with it. He believed the distinction between the ordinary and extraordinary gifts of the Spirit to be so necessary that ' the New Testament could not be understood without it ', and wished that Whitefield ' had not risen above any pretence to the ordinary influences unless he could have given some better evidences of it '. He himself had warned Whitefield against the possibility of delusion, to which he had replied that ' it was such an impression upon his own mind that he knew it to be divine, though he could not give any convincing proof of it '. Dr. Watts also thought that ' so large and general a charge as he had laid upon the clergy of the Established Church ' made

[1] Tyerman, *Life of John Wesley*, i, p. 244.
[2] Bp. Hough to Gibson, 22 Sept. 1739, Gibson MSS., Miscellaneous.

it impossible ' to know certainly whether it was true or not, and therefore these censures were by no means justifiable '; and concluded with the opinion that the best means of combating the new teaching would be the strict and careful fulfilment of the Bishop's directions concerning preaching and the private life of the clergy.[1]

Whitefield, as was natural in view of the catena of quotations from his *Journals*, which the Bishop had used to support his arguments, published a defence of his conduct, in which he denied the charge of enthusiasm. He definitely affirmed that he ' never did pretend to the extraordinary operations of the Holy Spirit ', but only laid claim to His ordinary gifts and influences ; and that so far from setting aside the teaching of the Church, his ' constant way of preaching was, first to prove his propositions by Scripture and then to illustrate them by the Collects and Articles of the Church of England ', to which all his hearers could testify, as also to the frequent exhortations he had given them ' to be constant at the service of the Church '. The apparent strangeness of his preaching was due to his insistence upon the absolute truth of justification by faith alone, without any recognition of good works as a necessary condition thereof, which doctrine the generality of the clergy had forgotten, more to their own reproach than to his for reviving it.[2] If the moderation of language and the quiet and respectful style which characterized this reply of Whitefield had governed his general utterance, there would have been little ground of controversy between Gibson and himself. But though his defence was sound and reasonable, it did not remove the offence caused by the extravagance of his language in sermon and *Journal*, which had been the real occasion of the Bishop's protest.

For the present a placid temper continued to pervade the discussions between Gibson and the Methodists. Towards the end of 1740 the Bishop and John Wesley had a further conversation, which seems to have been singularly cordial and free

[1] Dr. Isaac Watts to Bp. Gibson, 15 Aug. 1739, *Memoirs of Isaac Watts, D.D.*, London, 1806, p. 95. Godwin Pamph. Bodl. 609.

[2] ' The Rev. Mr. Whitefield's Answer to the Bishop of London's last Pastoral Letter ', 13 Aug. 1739.

from dissension. His lordship asked Wesley 'what he meant by perfection', and was so satisfied with the answer given 'without any disguise or reserve', that he said 'Mr. Wesley, if this be all you mean, publish it to all the world', which was done in the sermon on Christian Perfection.[1]

The same spirit inspired the references to Methodism in Gibson's Visitation Charge of 1741–2. After admonishing his clergy to be diligent in their pastoral duties, he referred to the recent attacks which had been made upon them, and which should only be 'a fresh incitement to care and diligence in the offices belonging to their function'. On the other hand, the memory of the disorders of the Commonwealth should be 'a sufficient warning to all who had a serious concern for religion, and a just regard to public peace and order in Church and State, to use their best endeavours to oppose and suppress that spirit of Enthusiasm which was now gone out; and which could not be opposed and suppressed more effectually than by preserving the bounds of parochial communion and opposing all breaches upon them; and then by every minister's satisfying his people in the course of a regular life and a diligent discharge of all duties and offices'. Particularly incumbents should convince their people of the excellencies of the Anglican Liturgy 'as a Service that comprised every branch of Christian devotion', and was conceived 'in a language that was grave, serious and expressive, without any of those irregular flights and redundancies from which extempore prayer was seldom free, and least of all that sort of it which presumptuously fathered itself upon an immediate dictate of the Spirit of God'. The main points which the Bishop emphasized, however, were that the Methodist revival was a challenge to the clergy to arouse themselves from lethargy, and that the only effectual way of correcting its extravagances was by the exercise of a zealous yet sober vigilance on the part of the Church.[2]

In the meantime, whilst Gibson endeavoured to avoid friction and to allow the movement to develop its good work unimpeded,

[1] Wesley, *Works*, xi, p. 359.

[2] Gibson, 'Charge to the Clergy of his diocese in his Visitation begun 1741 and finished 1742'.

a series of new incidents had occurred, which entailed serious consequences. John Wesley had now become a thorough itinerant, carrying his message into the Midlands, Yorkshire, and as far north as Tyneside. He was increasing the number of his lay preachers and developing the incipient organization of Methodist Societies. His breach with the Moravians had compelled him to found a new Methodist Society for the benefit of the seceders, and the propagation of his doctrines throughout the kingdom necessitated the creation of some sort of organization to maintain the zeal and allegiance of his converts, and to connect the scattered groups with one another. The establishment of Class Meetings with somewhat elaborate arrangements for cohesion and supervision, the opening of further meeting houses, and the conception of the idea of an annual conference of leaders to consider the national problems which the movement had to meet, were signs to all discerning men that the revival was now heading for independence. More disturbing features of this expansion were the phenomena of physical convulsions and hysterics, and the generation of a spirit of popular excitement which found expression in dreadful riots and scenes of disorder.

'Not only the peace of parishes but the harmony of households was continually destroyed. Men were made morally and sometimes even physically incapable of discharging their ordinary duties, and were often thrown for long periods into a condition of religious despondency that made life almost unendurable. . . . In the intense religious enthusiasm that was generated, many of the ties of life were snapped in twain. Children treated with contempt the commands of their parents, students the rules of their colleges, clergymen the discipline of their Church. The whole structure of society and almost all the amusements of life, appeared criminal.'[1]

The fervent emotional appeal of the preachers moved some to hysteria, some to blasphemy, but aroused all to a state of violent excitement. Religious terrorism on the one hand, and profane raillery on the other, produced an alarming instability of conduct. 'So much enthusiasm and so much credulity could

[1] Lecky, *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, ii, pp. 588–9.

hardly exist without attracting some imposters; the violently emotional character of Methodist piety was liable to dangerous reactions, and the habit of attributing every sudden impulse to a spiritual inspiration and of habitually depreciating good works was not always favourable to morality.'[1] It is true that these irregularities were only incidental and of less importance than the religious revival which was being produced by the new preaching, but they were none the less prominent and startling, and they were precisely of that nature calculated to strike terror into the heart of the order-loving unemotional eighteenth-century divines and to move them to immoderate hostility.

In 1744, therefore, Gibson entered the lists again with the publication of a pamphlet of *Observations upon the Conduct and Behaviour of a certain Sect usually distinguished by the name of Methodists*, which although published anonymously, bore convincing internal evidence of its authorship, and was virtually acknowledged by the Bishop, when he received a Moravian deputation which called upon him to protest against the misrepresentations of their society contained in it. It is evident from the spirit of this pamphlet that the situation had changed since 1739. The gentle remonstrance and moderate persuasions of the pastoral against lukewarmness and enthusiasm are replaced by unsparing denunciation. In order to understand the vigour of Gibson's language, it is necessary to glance at the general political condition of the nation. Already the War of the Austrian Succession had broken out, and there was some measure of panic in England lest the French should profit by it to restore the Jacobite Pretender to the throne. In such a situation tranquillity was an essential boon for the people, and instead of tranquillity, excitement and disorders everywhere reigned. In addition to political discontents, the Methodists were raising men to a high pitch of excitement throughout the country, and their course was being attended by violent outbursts of religious hysteria and no less violent riots and disturbances of the peace. Amid such circumstances of fear and unrest, it was natural that Gibson should see in the enthusiasm of the Methodists the like irregular

[1] Lecky, op. cit., ii, p. 596.

practices ' with those of the last century that had so great a share in bringing on those religious confusions, which brought a reproach upon Christianity in general, and which by degrees worked the body of the people into a national madness and frenzy in matters of religion '.[1]

Of one thing at least he seemed convinced. The Methodists should leave the Church. His first charge against them was that they had violated all the rules of the Church whilst claiming still to enjoy the protection of the civil laws by which it was established. They had set up meeting houses and sent out lay preachers, in neither case qualified according to the Toleration Act ; not content with holding services in Conventicles, they had even embarked upon a campaign of field preaching, ' by public advertisements inviting the rabble to be their hearers ' which was assuredly not contemplated by the provisions of that Act. ' Yet notwithstanding such open inroads upon the National Constitution, these teachers and their followers claimed to be thought members of the National Church and did accordingly join in communion with it.' Even in their attendance at the Communion they trangressed the rubrics of the Prayer Book. The custom of the Church, according to the 28th Canon was that parishioners should go to their own parish church so that the minister should be well acquainted with the character of those who presented themselves at the Table, and be able to take disciplinary action in the case of notorious evil livers. The Methodists overstepped the bounds of this custom by ' leaving their own parish churches where

[1] Gibson, ' Observations ', &c., London, 1744. Cf. the picture of ' a venerable Church in ruins ; that Church which, for so many years had been the glory and the bulwark of the Reformation, which for the purity of its doctrine, the decency and comeliness of its worship, and the conformity of its government to the primitive apostolical standard, was not inferior to, or to be equalled by, any Christian Church upon earth ; on a sudden shamefully defaced and demolished ; overspread with errors, heresies and blasphemies ; defiled with most horrid abominations ; rent in pieces with numberless divisions and swallowed up with disorder, contention and confusion ; . . . its ministers outraged and oppressed ; . . . and its people deprived of the benefits and comforts of their administration and left exposed to the poisonous infusions of blasphemous enthusiasts and illiterate mechanicks '. ' The Miserable and Distracted State of Religion in England upon the Downfall of the Church Establishment ', London, 1736, no name, Bp. Gibson Pamphlets, 45, B. 17, 4, Sion College.

they were known and coming from several quarters in great numbers to receive the Communion at other churches where they were not known', and that without first signifying their names to the minister as the rubric directs. In consequence of these irregularities Gibson expressed the definite opinion that the leaders 'would act a far more consistent part if they would either renounce communion with the Established Church or oblige themselves and their followers to have a greater regard to the rules and orders of it'.

The close connexion between the Methodists and the Moravian Societies involved the latter in the general condemnation, for it seemed to Gibson that an easy method of developing a corporate religious life outside the official services of the Church could have been found by the Methodists in the revival of the Religious Societies, rather than by association with a body of foreign schismatics. The members of these older societies had maintained their allegiance to the Church of England, and yet had discovered several opportunities for additional religious exercises 'without any violation of public order and regularity', thus earning the countenance and encouragement of the bishops.

Having thus dealt with the question of the relation of the new movement to the Church, Gibson criticized severely certain dangerous tendencies exhibited by it. He doubted whether the undue emphasis laid upon justification by faith would not lead to a low esteem and disregard of the moral duties of Christianity; and whether the civil effects of the 'same exalted strains and notions' would not be dangerous to the State 'by leading the inferiors into whose heads those notions were infused to a disesteem of their superiors'. Further, he refused to believe that 'a due and regular attendance on the public offices of religion, paid by good men in a serious and composed way, did not better answer the true ends of devotion than the sudden agonies, roarings and screamings' into which the Methodist hearers were cast; or that the service of religion was really forwarded by allowing 'itinerant preachers [to] run up and down from place to place, and from county to county, drawing after them confused multitudes of people, and leading

them into a disesteem of their own pastors as less willing or less able to instruct them in the way of salvation'. In any case there was much that savoured of impertinence in the spectacle of a few young men setting up their own schemes 'as the great standard of Christianity', and freely censuring all who refused to accept their shibboleths. Whitefield had publicly asserted that Archbishop Tillotson 'knew no more about true Christianity than Mahomet'; yet it was at least arguable that the author of *The Whole Duty of Man* had done greater service to religion 'in laying down rules to keep recreations of all kinds within the bounds of innocence, than those who censured him and absolutely denied that recreations of any kind, considered as such, were or could be innocent'. So also 'the melting terms and extravagant flights' of language in which Whitefield commonly expressed himself, might be calculated 'to amuse and captivate weak minds and draw together confused multitudes of hearers', but they could not be 'put in the balance in point of edification and instruction with a grave, serious and regular worship, accompanied with sound doctrine and exhortation methodically explained and enforced in a clear and affectionate manner'. There was a danger that the ranks of itinerant preachers would be swelled by the adhesion of many persons having 'no provision or settlement in life, nor perhaps either abilities or morals', who would be tempted 'to put on the garb and learn the genuine language of Methodists as the best expedient they could think of to procure for themselves a comfortable subsistence'. Finally, Gibson discharged the full force of his objection in the suggestion that the elaborate organization which Wesley was building up for his societies, was not only 'not warranted by any law', but might be construed as 'a presumptuous attempt to erect a new constitution upon a foreign plan, in contempt of those wise rules of government, discipline and worship, which were judged by our pious ancestors to be the best and most effectual means for preserving and maintaining religion, together with public peace and order in Church and State'.[1]

This manifesto was of considerable importance. Straightway

[1] Gibson, 'Observations', &c., London, 1744.

several bishops had it reprinted for circulation within their own dioceses, and the secret of its authorship did not remain long unknown. The ground of Gibson's attack was characteristic. He was offended particularly by the claim of the Methodists to overstep at will the bounds of parish and diocese, and their pretence of introducing true religion to a people, as it were, ignorant and pagan. Such a notion was fundamentally incompatible with his doctrine of an Established Church in a Christian nation. He doubted 'whether from the first establishment of Christian Churches, any one practice had been more carefully guarded against, at all times and in all countries, than that of bishops and presbyters breaking in upon the fixt provinces or bounds of another'; and whether it was not precisely 'to avoid the force of these reasonings against an unlimited commission' that the Methodists 'from the beginning had pretended to consider themselves as planters of the Gospel where it was not before, or had been lost'.[1] To yield to such theories would be to introduce a national confusion.

Whitefield felt it incumbent upon him to reply to these strictures, and wrote to the Bishop asking 'whether the report were true that his lordship composed them, that he might the better know to whom he might direct his answer'.[2] No direct reply was vouchsafed to this, but the Bishop's printer supplied Whitefield with a copy of the pamphlet, and on the 10th March he committed to the press *An Answer to the first part of an anonymous pamphlet*, &c. In this he complained vigorously of the unfairness of giving 'stabs in the dark', and proceeded to affirm in the strongest terms his zealous loyalty to the King and the Administration, and his devotion to the Established Church. In particular he asserted that he had perused 'all the Acts of King Charles II wherein the word "field" is mentioned' and had found 'they were intended to suppress seditious conventicles', so that they could not be applied to the Methodists, who were certainly not 'seditious sectaries,

[1] Gibson, 'Queries relating to the modern claims of the Methodist and Moravian teachers to an absolute and unlimited commission for spreading their doctrines in all parts of the world', Gibson MSS., Miscellaneous, No. 100.

[2] Tyerman, *Life of Whitefield*, ii, p. 90.

disloyal persons who, under pretence of tender consciences, contrive insurrections'. The prominence of this defence against the aspersion of political disaffection was due to the suspicions which were falling upon the Wesleys and Whitefield in consequence of the fear of a French invasion to restore the Stuart line, for it was a very common accusation that Methodists were but Papists in disguise. Finally, Whitefield stigmatized the prelatical pamphlet as 'a notorious libel' which 'came into public like a child dropped that nobody cared to own'.[1] By the time this reply was in circulation, its author was on his way to America, but in the course of the voyage he found leisure to compose a *Second Letter* bearing the date of 25th August. In this publication he defended himself against the censures pronounced on itinerant preaching, and observed that 'if all the Right Reverend the Bishops did their duty (especially my Lord of London, whose diocese is of such vast extent) they would all of them long since have become itinerant preachers'. Next he replied to the arguments urged against the preaching of the doctrines of justification by faith, sudden and instantaneous conversion and other cognate truths, declaring that Tillotson's *Whole Duty of Man*, since it omitted to teach justification by faith, 'might be more properly termed Half the Duty of Man.' In conclusion, he reiterated his charges against the parochial clergy and rebutted the accusation against himself of being an enthusiast.[2]

Despite the strictures of his pamphlet, Gibson still continued to treat John Wesley and his brother with personal kindness. The Methodist leaders were greatly troubled in 1744 by the conduct of one of their lay preachers, Thomas Williams, who, having attempted to secure ordination from the Archbishop and being prevented by the opposition of Charles Wesley, began not only to indulge in violent abuse against his former friends, but to entangle himself in various disgraceful episodes. His excesses brought great scandal upon the Wesleys, and especially

[1] Whitefield, 'An Answer to the first Part of an anonymous pamphlet, entitled Observations', &c. In a Letter to the Rt. Rev. the Bishop of London and the other the Rt. Rev. the Bishops concerned in the publication thereof', London, 1744.

[2] Ibid., 'A Second Letter', &c., Boston, 1744.

upon Charles, so that it was an act of particular grace on the part of Gibson to cause information to be sent to the latter 'that if he would come to him, and declare his innocency touching the scandals, and take the sacrament upon it, he would desire no further satisfaction, but himself clear him', an offer which Charles immediately accepted.[1] Similarly in 1747 John Wesley, who had been excluded from the London churches for eight years past, suddenly secured admittance to the pulpit of St. Bartholomew the Great in Smithfield, the rector of this church, Mr. Bateman, having been converted by the preaching of Howel Davies in Wales. The churchwardens, therefore, remonstrated to the Bishop that their rector 'invited Mr. Wesley very frequently to preach in his church', to which the cautious Gibson replied, 'What would you have me to do? I have no right to hinder him. Mr. Wesley is a clergyman, regularly ordained and under no ecclesiastical censure',[2] and so the matter ended.

The death of Gibson in 1748 brings the story of his dealings with the Methodists to an end without furnishing the materials for a complete judgement on his policy. He had lived during the period when the new movement was most unpopular, arousing most opposition, and exhibiting the less worthy features of its work in the hysterical outbursts which frequently attended its conversions. Only a later generation could understand and appreciate the more permanent and valuable results of its activity. The survey of the relations between Gibson and the Methodists may be concluded with a consideration of the reply of John Wesley to certain observations made by the Bishop in his Visitation Charge of 1747, which has not survived. It is possible, however, to gather from the quotations which are made from the charge that it was inspired by the same spirit of aggressive hostility which had breathed in the pages of the *Observations*. According to the citations made by Wesley, Gibson laid upon the Methodists the following charges; that they 'annoyed the established ministry by drawing over to themselves the lowest and most ignorant of the people by

[1] T. Jackson, *The Journal of Charles Wesley*, 26 Jan. 1745, i, p. 393.
[2] J. Wesley, *Works*, xiii, p. 138.

pretences to greater sanctity ' ; that they made ' inward secret and sudden impulses the guides of their actions, resolutions and designs ' ; that they maintained a doctrine of ' sinless perfection ', and persuaded the people ' that the established worship with a regular attendance upon it, was not sufficient to answer the ends of devotion ' ; and that they ' misled people into an opinion of the high merit of their performances to the neglect of all the business of their stations '. Therefore, Gibson called upon his clergy, one and all, to ' lift up their voice like a trumpet and to warn and arm and fortify all mankind against the people called Methodists '.

John Wesley replied to most of the charges by a simple denial ; he asserted that he ' made the word of God the rule of all his actions, and no more followed any secret impulse instead thereof than he followed Mahomet or Confucius ' ; that he neither taught nor believed the doctrine of a sudden instantaneous justification, but did teach that of sinless perfection in contrast to those who maintained that God required ' no more than an honest desire and endeavour to find ourselves less and less in a state of imperfection '. With regard to the efficacy of attendance upon the public worship of the Church, he himself had been a diligent attender for many years without having ' more of the love of God than a stone ' in consequence, yet he always exhorted his hearers to pay such attendance. Likewise, he insisted in his preaching that Christianity required diligence ' in all stations and all conditions and the performance of the lowest offices of life as unto God '. Above all, he indignantly repudiated the aspersion which had been cast upon the Methodists by applying to them the words of Bishop Sanderson ' and all this to serve their own belly, to make a prey of the poor deluded proselytes, for by this means the people fall unto them and thereout suck they no small advantage ' ; to this calumny he could only reply that the Bishop of London must know ' that his own Fellowship and his brother's Studentship afforded them more than sufficient for life and godliness '. The most moving passage occurred in the conclusion. There he declared that his aim was not to convert men from one church to another, but ' to proselyte sinners to repentance '.

'I would fain set this point in a clear light,' he continued. 'There are, in and near Moorfields, ten thousand poor souls for whom Christ died, rushing headlong into Hell. Is Dr. Bulkeley, the parochial minister, both willing and able to stop them? If so, let it be done and I have no place in these parts. I go and call other sinners to repentance. But if, after all that he has done and all he can do, they are still in the broad way to destruction let me see if God will put a word even in my mouth. My lord, the time is short. I am past the noon of life. Your lordship is old and full of days, having passed the usual age of man. It cannot therefore be long before we shall both stand naked before God. Will you then rejoice in your success in opposing our doctrine? The Lord God grant it may not be said in that hour "These have perished in their iniquity; but their blood I require at thy hands".'

The test of his labours was the evangelical precept 'by their fruits ye shall know them'; and these results were patent before the eyes of all: 'the habitual drunkard that was, is now temperate: the whoremonger now flees fornication: he that stole, steals no more but works with his hands.'[1] *Si monumentum requiris, circumspice.*

The publication of this letter produced a profound impression. So great was its effect and so widespread its influence, that 'a vulgar report got abroad that the Bishop of London had turned Methodist'.[2] Although there is nothing to indicate the impression produced upon Gibson by this reply, it is to be wished that a spirit of greater charity had inspired his last public utterances against the Methodists. At the outset he had seemed predisposed to regard the new movement with a considerable degree of sympathy, but the course of events had driven him into a bitter antipathy.

One of the most interesting features of English religious life in this century is the emergence of the Moravian community to a position of prominence and importance. This ancient brotherhood, which traced back its origin to the reformer

[1] J. Wesley, 'A Letter to the Rt. Rev. the Lord Bishop of London, occasioned by his lordship's late Charge to his clergy', 11 June 1747, London, 1747.

[2] Henry Moore, *Life of John Wesley*, ii, p. 415, London, 1824.

John Huss, had been revived by the wave of mystic pietism which had passed through Germany in the seventeenth century, and had already come into occasional contact with the Church of England. At the time of the Restoration, Comenius had sent an account of its history to Charles II with an affectionate address to the Established Church. In 1717 Archbishop Wake had expressed his sympathy with the Brethren, and his satisfaction at what he had heard of their episcopal orders. Eleven years later a deputation from Herrnhuth had visited this country, and, though impeded by the opposition of Ziegenhagen, the chaplain to Queen Caroline, had been cordially received by Countess Lippe, a lady of great influence at Court. A more important visit, however, was paid in 1735, when a German band of emigrants on their way to Georgia were recommended by Count Zinzendorf to the Governor and Trustees of the Colony. The conversion of the heathen being the principal object contemplated, the sanction of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel was sought on their behalf, and, by the favour of General Oglethorpe, the Governor of Georgia, was obtained. By his influence they were introduced to Bishop Gibson, as Bishop of the Plantations, and departed for America with the desired approbation.[1] After this introduction, a second batch of Moravian emigrants happened to cross the Atlantic in the same vessel as the brothers Wesley, and thus there began that connexion between Moravianism and Methodism which was so powerful a factor in shaping the destiny of the great religious revival. But in addition to the impression which the brethren made upon John Wesley during the voyage, they had also impressed profoundly one James Hutton, a London bookseller who had travelled with Wesley to Gravesend to bid him farewell. This young man, upon returning home, began to gather round him a small group of admirers of the Methodists, who were also members of certain of the old Religious Societies which still survived in the capital. At their meetings he communicated the letters which he received from the Wesleys

[1] D. Benham, *Memoirs of James Hutton*, p. 21, London, 1856; also Stoughton, *Religion in England*, vol. vi, *The Church in the Georgian Era*, pp. 101 seq.

in Georgia. At this point these Religious Societies were brought into contact with the new revival movement, and the exact distinctions between the Methodist and Moravian elements on the one hand, and those borrowed from the Religious Societies on the other, all of which afterwards became fused in the Wesleyan organization, are difficult to trace. The evidence of the state of the Religious Societies during the Hanoverian period is very scanty, but it is clear that they had fallen into formality and spiritual deadness, though they kept up their regular meetings until 1737.[1] In that year, however, they came under the influence of Whitefield, whose impassioned preaching attracted large numbers of people, whom he referred to the society raised by Hutton when he himself departed for America. To this nucleus there was now added the fresh element of a Moravian congregation, introduced by Count Zinzendorf, who visited England in 1737, and before his return to the Continent planted an outpost of Moravianism in the Metropolis. Matters were at this stage when John Wesley returned from Georgia in February 1738, and made the acquaintance of the Moravian missionary, Peter Böhler, an alliance which issued in the formation of the Fetter Lane Society, into which Hutton and his coterie were also drawn. This alliance continued until July 1740, when an open rupture, following upon a series of acute differences, occurred between Wesley and the Moravians, which resulted in his exclusion from the Fetter Lane Society and his foundation of a separate society for his own followers. Henceforth, Methodism and Moravianism developed along separate lines, and the latter, by the devotion of its members and their single-hearted zeal, spread rapidly into Yorkshire, Wiltshire and other parts of the country.

Already the Moravians were becoming the object of suspicion and dread on the part of orthodox Churchmen. There were 'many members of the old Religious Societies to whose deliberate self-righteous minds this Gospel was a stumbling block', and who began to draw back from the new and dangerous tendencies

[1] G. V. Portus, *Caritas Anglicana*, p. 197; the entire chapter (c. viii) is valuable in this connexion.

of the movement.[1] The spirit of enthusiasm and fervour which was engendered by the preaching of Wesley and Whitefield, and the even more startling doctrines of Böhler, requiring stillness and abstention from all religious observances which might tend to destroy the merits of faith by suspicion of works, caused many persons to shrink from association with such eccentrics. Bishop Gibson had approved the application of the emigrants who desired to assist in the evangelization of the Plantations, but it was an entirely different matter for a foreign Society to claim the right of setting up its organization in a Christian nation, whose religious needs were already sufficiently provided for by an Established Church. Therefore, fearing the absorption of the Religious Societies into the new band of the Moravians, or organizations of the Methodists, he determined to deliver them from their new friends, of whose influence he had grave misgivings. Already in September 1742, the Fetter Lane Society had applied for a licence under the Toleration Act to conduct their worship as 'Moravian Brethren formerly of the English Communion'. They had been driven to this step by the assaults which had been made upon them by the mob, who identified them with the Methodists, but their action had been denounced by Zinzendorf himself, who wished the societies to remain in communion with the National Church, from which the great majority of their members were drawn. He regarded their application for a licence as Dissenters as an act of schism.[2] Early in the following year Bishop Gibson prevailed upon Mr. Hopson, one of the twelve stewards of the Religious Societies, 'to proclaim excommunication from their fellowship for all who should hear the Moravian Brethren or Whitefield or any other.'[3] It was even said that he contemplated an address to Parliament against the Brethren, and he certainly employed agents to keep the movement under supervision and to report to him any startling development. One of these agents was Mr. Thomas Broughton, who had formerly been an intimate associate of the Wesleys, but had parted decisively from them later and had become Lecturer of All Hallows, Lombard Street,

[1] Benham, *Memoirs of Hutton*, p. 29.
[2] Ibid., p. 79.
[3] Ibid., p. 109.

in 1741, and Secretary to the S.P.C.K. in 1743.[1] This worthy clergyman 'the better to satisfy his lordship, on the 29th September [1743] attended the public service of the Brethren' and took notes of the discourse delivered there, 'the Bishop having desired from him an account of the Methodists and Moravian Brethren, and of the number of such as had joined them.' He reported that the Moravians were a sober, good, and holy people, but 'had strange notions and a strange doctrine and explained the Scriptures so strangely', and as a result of the evidence thus presented, Gibson concluded them to be 'the most enthusiastic people that ever were since Christianity was in the world'.[2] In the same year the Bishop of the Moravian Church had sent a written appeal to him to exercise his authority to stop the hostility of the 'so-called presbyters of New York' and of the Methodist preachers in America towards their Brethren, by issuing an official letter declaring his approval of their doctrines and his commendation of their labours.[3] To this communication, however, he vouchsafed no answer. The results of his inquiries into the doctrine and organization of the Moravian Societies were soon seen in the publication in 1744 of his *Observations upon the Conduct and Behaviour of a Certain Sect, usually distinguished by the name of Methodists.* In this pamphlet he did not distinguish between the Methodists and Moravians, but included both in his denunciation of disturbers of the Church's peace. After dealing with the shortcomings of the Methodists, he observed that another new sect had recently sprung up in England 'the heads of which had for some time been coming over from Moravia', whither also 'several of our Methodists had gone in person to acquaint themselves more perfectly with the principles and practices of that people'. He advanced several objections against the doctrines of the Brethren,

[1] L. Tyerman, *The Oxford Methodists*, 1873, pp. 344, 349.
[2] Benham, *Memoirs of Hutton*, p. 128.
[3] Ibid., p. 164. The Moravian bishops complain that 'words can scarcely express the exceedingly hostile fury with which we are persecuted by the so-called presbyters of New York on the one hand, and on the other by the ambulatory teachers of New England, of Pennsylvania and of the Raretan (New Jersey) district, distinguished by the name of Methodists.'

asserting that in their teaching they 'rested the whole of religion upon the point of believing', to the exclusion of the moral law as no part of the Christian dispensation; that they tended 'to decry all human qualifications for the ministry', which was demonstrated by the fact that 'several of those who exercised the offices of prayer and preaching in their assemblies were common mechanicks'; and that the general result of this neglect of merely human efforts was 'to resolve all into the immediate teachings and workings of the Spirit'. Furthermore, they had presumed to set up public assemblies for worship, at first only inconsiderable in numbers, but recently they 'had grown into a considerable body and, both in city and country were multiplying bands and societies in the Moravian way'; and all this in spite of the fact that they had not complied with the provisions of the Act of Uniformity by taking out a licence as a foreign congregation.[1] These sharp censures show that Gibson was offended by the impropriety of their conduct. To his mind it was an act of indefensible presumption for a foreign sect to intrude itself into a Christian nation, and to attempt to draw away some of its subjects from the Established Church.

It was natural that the Moravians should wish to defend themselves against the allegations made by the influential Bishop of London, more especially as he persisted in joining their society with the Methodist movement, from which they had parted, after a severe dispute, some years previously. Accordingly a deputation, consisting of Mr. Wencelaus Neisser, a Moravian minister, and one of his colleagues, waited upon Gibson on the 20th August 1744, to discuss with him the complaints he had made against their Brotherhood. The interview was not very satisfactory. In the first place, Neisser could not conduct a conversation in English, nor the Bishop in German, and the Moravians had omitted to bring Hutton with them to overcome this difficulty. Secondly, so soon as Gibson discovered that they were officially 'deputed by a synod of bishops and clergy of the Moravian Church', he refused to 'enter with them into any particulars upon that head', because

[1] Gibson, 'Observations', &c., p. 7, London, 1744.

of the irregularity involved in ' any particular bishop's taking upon himself to transact an affair between this and another Church ', a matter which should be referred ' first to the two Metropolitans . . . in order to be communicated [by them] if they thought proper, to their respective suffragans '. Thirdly, he was definitely hostile to their attempts to claim kinship with the Church of England. He confessed that, with regard to their claim to be ' the same Church ', he did not understand the meaning of it, ' unless it be that they pretended that they were an Episcopal Church ' ; and if they affirmed that they were ' a sister Church ', then he answered that very often near relatives agreed best when they were parted, and ' the best way to preserve peace and a good understanding between sister Churches was to leave both to their own particular methods of government and discipline without interfering with each other '.[1]

Thus ended the interview between Gibson and Neisser. The Bishop was firmly convinced that the last point he had emphasized was ' an undoubted truth and a rule necessary for preserving mutual peace, the transgressing of which, by the endeavours that had been used to introduce among us a Moravian discipline, had given no small disturbance to the bishops and clergy and was justly complained of by both '. In order to remove the possibility of any misunderstanding of his attitude, such as might arise from Mr. Neisser's imperfect acquaintance with the English tongue, he wrote to Hutton, with whom he had discussed the case of the Moravians on a previous occasion, to make plain the tenor of the interview.[2] Meanwhile a copy of Gibson's pamphlet had fallen into the hands of Count Zinzendorf who immediately wrote to him on the 22nd August protesting against his aspersions on the Brethren. The Moravian Bishop expressed his surprise ' that anyone belonging to the Church or Kingdom of England should be so ignorant as to call . . . that Church a new sect, which all who were well acquainted with ecclesiastical history '—and

[1] Gibson, ' Concerning the Moravians ', Gibson MSS., Miscellaneous, No. 100.

[2] Gibson to Hutton, 20 Aug. 1744, Benham, *Life of James Hutton*, p. 159.

especially the present Archbishop of Canterbury—'had called an episcopal and apostolical Church and the most ancient among the Protestant Churches'. He pointed out further that a protest had been lodged against the action of the Fetter Lane Society in taking out a licence as a Dissenting congregation, because the Moravian Church did not wish its Brethren in England 'to be known by any other designation than that of doctors in confederation with the Anglican Church and participators of its sacred ritual in principles and essentials'. The Moravian ministers had done their utmost to persuade their adherents to remain in communion with the Established Church; but 'when such conservation was no longer practicable, it was certainly better that those moved by maternal affection towards children should permit them to be assigned to the friendly care of the Moravian Brethren, rather than that, wrested from their charge, they should be permitted to fall or be precipitated into the bosom of sects less orthodox, less regularly constituted, and less friendly to the Anglican Church'. Therefore, Zinzendorf suggested that the English bishops and the Moravian Brethren should confer together annually as to the best means of directing their joint efforts towards the end 'of binding pious minds fast to the ancient altars, of bringing back such as had been drawn away and of retaining such as were refractory, if not practicable within the fold, if possible within the fence'.[1]

The Moravians laid great emphasis upon the attitude of Archbishop Potter, since his friendliness and sympathy were a striking contrast to the reserve and suspicion of the Bishop of London. His Grace indeed had committed himself quite definitely to their support, having avowed his conviction 'that the Church of the Brethren was truly an apostolic and episcopal Church, whose doctrines contained nothing whatever militating against the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England', and having gone even further in saying 'that without the consent of the King, as Head of the Church, he was not at liberty to make a further acknowledgement of the orthodoxy

[1] Count Zinzendorf to Bp. Gibson, 22 Aug. 1744, Benham, *Memoirs of Hutton*, pp. 157–9.

of the Brethren, but from his heart he could advocate their cause at the peril of injuring his own '.[1] In 1737 also he had sent a letter of cordial congratulation to Zinzendorf upon his consecration to the episcopate. A further defence of Moravianism was made by Hutton in his reply to Gibson, in which he protested against the confusion of Moravians with the Methodists, and maintained the same position as Zinzendorf with regard to the relations of the Brethren with the National Church, assuring his lordship that they had no desire to raise a tumult within its borders, and expressing the hope that further examination of the evidence would convince him of the falsity of his charges.[2]

Since Hutton had forwarded the Bishop's letter to Zinzendorf, the latter took occasion to make further long apologia for the Brethren in a reply dated the 29th September 1744. In this he affirmed that ' the Moravian Church and the English Church were not two different churches, but two branches of the same church ', and that the latter had for two centuries past counted the former ' to be a Protestant Episcopal Church, and everywhere without distinction admitted its ministers to every act whatever in the holy ministry ' ; so that ' it was not in the power of any particular person to deprive them of that privilege '. Further, he disavowed all connexion with the Methodists, ' it being very difficult to decide whether the Moravians had a greater dislike to the Methodists' plan of salvation or the Methodists to that of the Moravians ', and reiterated his former contention that the Moravian ministers desired to give spiritual guidance to their adherents in a private manner, without detaching them from their particular churches, and without any notion of erecting a rival sect.[3] Bishop Gibson, however, was unconvinced and refused to enter into any discussion, either by interview or correspondence, of the claims of the Brethren. He was inclined to think that the Archbishop would not have written as he had done in 1737 ' if

[1] Stoughton, *History of Religion in England*, vol. vi, *The Church in the Georgian Era*, p. 103.

[2] James Hutton to Gibson, 25 Aug., Benham, *Memoirs of Hutton*, pp. 160–3.

[3] Count Zinzendorf to Bp. Gibson, 29 Sept. 1744, ibid., pp. 164–6.

they and their principles had been as well understood then as they had been since'. In any case particular bishops should not engage in private negotiations with them, both out of respect for their Metropolitan, and because John Wesley had accused them, without making 'any distinction between ministers and others', of 'not using plainness of speech and a frank open carriage to all men', and of showing 'much subtlety, much evasion and disguise, much guile and dissimulation'.

For his own part, Gibson wished to have satisfactory answers to the following questions:

'(1) What business had they here and upon what motives and inducements did they come over to settle here and plant a foreign discipline among us? (2) What right had they to suppose that the edification of our people was not sufficiently provided for by the bishops and parochial ministers in every diocese without standing in need of assistance from abroad? (3) Whether the liberty they took to send their ministers into all nations to teach what they called the true Gospel, could be warranted by anything less than an apostolical mission and authority, especially to any country where Christianity was and had long been the national religion? (4) Whether they had allowance of the King to hold meetings for religious worship, as the Act of Uniformity required in relation to foreigners or aliens of the Reformed Churches?'

In addition he thought that their doctrinal teaching was not unexceptionable. John Wesley had accused them of drifting dangerously towards Antinomianism because they taught faith as the only duty, discouraged attendance at the sacraments as means of grace, and denied the possibility of degrees of faith or the value of any spiritual exercises as aids to it. From these considerations

'three other enquiries naturally arose, (1) whether such doctrines were fitt to be propagated among our own people? (2) Whether . . . the archbishops and bishops were not obliged to attend to the mischiefs of having these principles and doctrines transplanted hither? (3) Whether a Church which maintained such doctrines . . . was fitt to be owned by us, either as a sister Church, or what they

claimed (upon what grounds Gibson knew not) as the same Church?'[1]

Clearly Gibson was hostile to any friendly relations with the Moravians. In part his objections were due to his exaggerated admiration for the constitution of the National Church, which could not be altered to meet the whims of foreign enthusiasts. But in part also his charges were derived from the account given by John Wesley in his *Journals*,[2] of his quarrel with the Brethren. Of these it is sufficient to remark that the doctrines of 'stillness', and of abstention from all outward ordinances, which were taught by Böhler in London, and his extreme suspicion of all forms of religious activity, lest the merits of faith should be lost through preoccupation with good works, were undoubtedly dangerous and extravagant notions. Wesley was right in combating them. But they were the opinions of a few fanatics, not the teaching of the Moravian Church. 'Before half a dozen years had passed, the London Moravians dropped the very doctrines for opposing which Wesley was expelled from preaching in Fetter Lane'. Indeed, 'only two months after the Fetter Lane disruption, Wesley himself cleared the Moravian Church from the aspersion that it held such heresies. They were the spawn of foolish fanatics who regarded themselves as Moravians but were hardly worthy of the name.'[3] Gibson was, therefore, hardly just in charging these opinions on the society as a whole. They were not, however, his chief objections. To his mind the Brethren were a company of alien sectaries, not only breaking in upon the bounds of an Established Church, but also introducing enthusiastic notions, and this was sufficient ground for condemnation. Meanwhile, Count Zinzendorf came to England in 1747, to organize a campaign to procure an Act of Parliament officially recognizing them as an Episcopal Church. They had already secured the passing of a law to allow them, like the Quakers, to substitute an affirmation for an oath, but now something more

[1] Gibson, 'Concerning the Moravians', Gibson MSS., Miscellaneous, No. 100.

[2] Wesley's *Journals*, from 1st Nov. 1739 to 3rd Sept. 1741, *passim*. Standard Edition, vol. ii, Pt. IV.

[3] Tyerman, *Life of John Wesley*, i, p. 308.

ambitious was desired. Archbishop Potter was, of course, favourable, but the Bishop of London 'unwilling freely to enter into conversation on this subject, appeared rather opposed to such acknowledgement '.[1] Fortunately for the success of the scheme, he died before it came to maturity. In 1749 the Act was passed, and though it was a task of some difficulty to win over Sherlock, who succeeded Gibson, it may be affirmed that it would have been far more difficult to secure the assent of his predecessor. With this incident the story of the relations of Gibson with the Moravians comes to an end. The Bishop had treated their Brotherhood with scant courtesy. He was accustomed to deal in a high-handed manner with the misguided enthusiasts who crossed his path, but in dismissing the claims of the Moravians with unrelieved censure, he had acted too much in the spirit of a pedantic lawyer.

Legalism, however, was a fundamental trait in his character. His researches into the legal constitution of the Church had inspired him with a reverential respect for its organization, and his imagination of a vast conspiracy of Deists, Papists, Tories, and Dissenters to overthrow it, had driven him into the position of its zealous defender, determined not to yield one jot or tittle of its prerogative. Never had the Church of England possessed a more ardent champion. The eccentric Whiston observed of him with much aptness that he ' seemed to think the Church of England, as it just then happened to be, established by modern Laws and Canons, came down from heaven with the Athanasian Creed in its hand '.[2] At least he showed a singular inability to deal sympathetically with those who differed from it. He would not suffer dissenters gladly.

[1] Benham, *Memoirs of Hutton*, p. 205.
[2] Whiston, *Memoirs*, i, p. 253.

X

THE PLANTATIONS

UNTIL England was raised to a new position of importance as an imperial power by the Peace of Paris, which closed the Seven Years' War in 1763, the majority of its citizens had taken little interest in the group of colonies which had been planted during the previous century on the Atlantic seaboard of North America. Not even the leading statesmen of Great Britain had understood that the distant settlers of 'the Plantations' had 'called into existence a new world to redress the balance of the old'. On the contrary, an almost incredible ignorance prevailed amongst Ministers of the Crown concerning the elementary geographical features of the new Continent. 'It is stated by a very considerable American authority that letters had repeatedly arrived from the Secretary of State who was officially entrusted with the administration of the Colonies, addressed "to the Governor of the Island of New England"; as it was said also that "Grenville lost America because he read the American dispatches, which none of his predecessors had done".'[1] If the political connexion between England and its colonies was so slight, it was only to be expected that the ecclesiastical bond would be more indefinite, for one of the chief motives which had impelled the stream of emigrants, had been the desire to escape from the Act of Uniformity and the intolerant exclusiveness of the Established Church. Only Virginia had been founded as a 'Church and Crown' colony, though Carolina had accepted formally and without enthusiasm the legal establishment of the Church of England. By the end of the seventeenth century, however, most of the original Charters of the colonies had been withdrawn, the supremacy of the Crown had been asserted, and as a corollary thereto the Church had slipped into a position of quasi-establishment. At the time of Bishop Gibson's translation to the see of London,

[1] Lecky, *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, iii, p. 305.

a promotion which included the oversight of the Plantations also, the Church was legally established in Virginia, Maryland, South Carolina, and three counties of New York, and was struggling to secure a footing in the Northern and Middle Colonies. Gibson realized at the outset that 'the affairs of the Plantations were like to be a great addition to the care of his diocese', yet, 'as no other person was appointed to superintend them', he consented 'to accept this additional responsibility'.[1] With characteristic zeal he set to work immediately to make inquiry into the legal basis for, and the extent of, his jurisdiction in America, and into the actual condition of the churches there.

The origins of the Bishop of London's jurisdiction over the Plantations were hidden in obscurity. It is possible that the tradition arose from the fact that the bishop was one of the members of the original Virginia Company, and so had interested himself in the religious state of the settlement. More probably, however, 'the proper place to look for the origin of the precedent—for it had a basis no more definite or authoritative—on which the Bishop of London's jurisdiction rested, is in the Stuart policy, instigated by Laud, of seeking to extend the Church of England establishment to every part of the known world where the English government had a foothold'.[2] An Order in Council had been issued in 1633 placing all foreign churches as 'concerning their church government under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of London as their diocesan', but that this was intended to refer to the churches of the Merchant Adventurers' Company at Delft and Hamburg, and not to America, is demonstrated by the fact that Laud produced a separate scheme for sending a bishop to New England to keep the Puritans in order there. With his death, however, 'his vast plan passed out of consideration, leaving no trace behind save a shadowy tradition, which came to serve as a precedent to the succeeding Bishops of London for the

[1] Gibson to Lord Carteret, 18 Sept. 1723, Gibson MSS. iv. 4.

[2] A. L. Cross, *The Anglican Episcopate and the American Colonies*, Harvard, 1902, p. 12. This is the latest and most accurate account of the relation of the Bishops of London to the Colonial Church, and has been largely consulted for the present chapter.

exercise of their colonial authority '.[1] After the Restoration, the connexion which had been broken was restored, and Bishop Compton, who occupied the see of London from 1675 to 1713, took a particular interest in the colonies. He secured the insertion into the Instructions issued to Colonial Governors of a clause requiring them to see that the Book of Common Prayer was duly used at all services, and ordering them not to prefer any clergyman to a benefice in their colony ' without a certificate from the Bishop of London of his being conformable to the doctrine of the Church of England '. By his influence also there was added in 1685 to the Instructions of Sir Philip Howard, Governor of Jamaica, the following clause : ' and to the end the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the said Bishop of London may take place in that our Island, as far as conveniently may be, we do think fit that you give all countenance and encouragement in the exercise of the same excepting only the collating benefices, granting licences for marriages, and probate of wills, which we have reserved to you our Governor and the Commander in chief for the time being '. Furthermore Compton began the practice which was continued by Robinson and Gibson, his successors, of appointing commissaries to exercise delegated authority in the Plantations, and he busied himself to secure a supply of worthy clergy to undertake the charge of parishes there. From these evidences of episcopal activity, the tradition developed that an Order in Council had been issued to Compton defining his jurisdiction in America. Accordingly Gibson made a diligent search for this elusive commission, and ' examined all the Council Books of the reign of Charles II page by page, but did not find any such Order of Council, either entered there, or remaining in the Council office '. He was also informed by his legal advisers ' that such an Order, though it should be found, would not warrant the Bishop to grant commissions to others, unless he himself should be first empowered to do so by a Commission of the King under the Great Seal, the Plantations not being a part of any diocese, but remaining under the sole and immediate jurisdiction of the King, and

[1] Ibid., p. 22.

that jurisdiction not to be legally delegated but under the Great Seal '.[1]

In view of the precarious basis of his authority, Gibson determined to postpone the exercise of it until he had secured a new and explicit commission. Therefore he submitted to Lord Townshend a memorial on the subject, in the hope that, ' after it had received his lordship's corrections, it might not be improper to be presented to His Majesty at a general Council in order to be referred to a committee and considered there '. The matter was, indeed, a pressing one, because during the interim ' no jurisdiction could be exercised . . . in the Plantations, and the clergy in particular, who were none of the most regular, did what they pleased without control '.[2] Townshend, upon reading the paper, ' liked it well ' and promised immediately to present it to the Council.[3] In this petition, Gibson referred to the uncertainty attaching to his jurisdiction by reason of the absence of a definite Order in Council, and quoted the clause in the instructions to Governor Howard of Jamaica as presumptive proof of the authority of the Bishop of London. He observed also that in consequence of this uncertainty, many commissaries ' had been absolutely forbidden and hindered to hold any courts at all or to proceed judicially in any matter whatsoever ' by their Governors, who claimed the power of correcting scandalous clergy as a right of their own office, so that ' the jurisdiction of the Bishop of London in the Plantations was become purely nominal '. Therefore he appealed for an inquiry into the true extent and basis of his authority.[4] Unfortunately the matter proceeded

[1] ' A True State of the Bishop of London's Jurisdiction in the Plantations abroad ', Carte Papers, No. 310, Bodl. Carte Papers, lxxviii.

[2] Gibson to Townshend, 16 Sept. 1724, Gibson MSS. iv. 15.

[3] Townshend to Gibson, 19 Sept. 1724, ibid. 10.

[4] Petition of Edmund, Lord Bishop of London, Fulham MSS. Box, ' Papers collected for the Bishop of London's Visit to America, 1907 '. It does not appear that Gibson delayed to present the petition until he had received a letter from Commissary W. Gordon of Barbadoes, dated 3rd Nov. 1725 (as is suggested in Cross, op. cit., pp. 53–5). The Committee of the Privy Council had already referred it to the Law Officers on 26th April 1725. Gordon's letter did sketch the outline of the development of the Bishop of London's jurisdiction, but did not add any new facts to those collected by Gibson.

much more slowly than he desired. The Privy Council referred his petition to a Committee on the 22nd December 1724, the Committee requested the opinion of the Attorney- and the Solicitor-General on April 26th following, and this opinion was delivered on the 27th December 1725. In it the legal advisers declared, that the three exceptions mentioned in the clause of Sir Philip Howard's Instructions implied 'that the Bishop's jurisdiction was thereby confirmed and established in all other cases', and that the method of its exercise was 'the proceeding judicially according to the ecclesiastical laws of this realm by a Commissary duly appointed in each government'. They observed, however, that since there was 'some reason to apprehend that the body of the people in the Plantations would not be easy under a general exercise of jurisdiction over the manners of the laity as well as the clergy', it might be 'a matter of deliberation to what degrees it would be prudential to subject the manners of the laity to spiritual jurisdiction and censures'; and they suggested that the Bishop's power should be limited to the visitation of all churches in which the rites and liturgy of the Church of England were used, the correction of clerical manners and conduct by ecclesiastical censures, and the maintenance of the fabrics of churches and parsonages, so that the laity would be comprehended within its scope only so far as they were concerned in the payment of dues for the repairs of the sacred edifices. With regard to the correction of vice amongst the laity, they expressed the opinion that this might be effected by a review 'of all the laws in being against prophaneness and immorality', the enforcement of which would be best left to the civil power. Finally they declared their judgement that as the Plantations did not belong to any diocese, the ecclesiastical jurisdiction over them was resident in the King and must be devolved from him by granting to the Bishop of London a commission under the Great Seal.[1]

A further period of delay ensued before these recommendations were given effect, and the Order authorizing the issue of

[1] Report of the Attorney- and Solicitor-General, 27 Dec. 1725, Fulham MSS., ibid.

a warrant for the exercise of this jurisdiction was not signed until the 31st October 1726. According to its provisions the Bishop of London was empowered to exercise jurisdiction in the following matters; in the visitation of churches, in the citation of all priests and deacons in the Orders of the Church of England so as to inquire into their morals and conduct, and to correct and punish any offences by suspension, excommunication, or like measures, in the provision of ornaments, and the maintenance of the fabric, of churches. He was also authorized to appoint Commissaries, removable at pleasure, who should exercise delegated jurisdiction, and a right of appeal was allowed from their decisions to certain of the Privy Council enumerated in the Commission.[1] But within nine months of the issue of this Commission, and before its effects had begun to be felt in America, George I died, and since the Commission expired with him, Gibson had to renew his labours almost from the beginning. In addition he did not possess the confidence of the new sovereign as he had done that of the old, a fact which increased the difficulty of securing a speedy dispatch of the business. He therefore laid the matter before His Majesty, as it was his duty to do, but declared that 'as to the event (that is, whether or no any Commission at all were granted, or whether to him or any other person) he was wholly indifferent which way it was determined, having work enough in his own diocese at home to keep him in full employment. Only he foresaw that great inconvenience and much confusion must ensue if no commission at all were granted or if it were too long delayed'.[2] The Commission, however, was

[1] A copy of this Order is preserved in B.M. Add. MS. 36126, No. 102. Gibson had pressed for the insertion of 'a general clause to be added to the enumeration of the several heads of jurisdiction to this effect, "And also to exercise jurisdiction, spiritual and ecclesiastical, in such other cases as We from time to time shall judge proper and expedient and shall signify the same under Our Sign Manual"' (Gibson to Sir P. Yorke, 8 Jan. 1725/6, Correspondence with the first Lord Hardwicke, BM. Add. MS. 35585, No. 30). Such a clause was inserted in the preliminary draft (dated 25th May 1726): 'Ac in tal. al. causis et materiis quae per nos tibi praefato Epo. Londinensi sub reguli signo nro manuali cum advisamento privati concilii (nri) in posterum significat: fuerint'; but was afterwards deleted (S. P. Dom. Geo. I, B. 62, P. R. O.).

[2] Gibson to the Duke of Newcastle, 18 June 1727, S. P. Dom. Geo. II, B. 1; also, Gibson, 'A Memorial to the King', Gibson MSS. iv. 25.

reissued to him on the 29th April 1728, differing from that of George I in the respect that his jurisdiction was not extended to the repairing of churches, for it had been pointed out to him 'that the laws of the several governments had already provided for the repair of churches and the furnishing such things as were necessary to divine service', whereupon he, 'desiring as much as possible to avoid the giving of offence, and the raising any uneasiness, was content that the new Commission should be confined to a jurisdiction over the clergy alone'.[1] In accordance with this decision, a clause was inserted in the Instructions to the Governors, requiring them to 'give all countenance and due encouragement to the said Bishop of London or his Commissaries' in the legal exercise of his jurisdiction, as defined by the Commission, a copy of which was 'to be forthwith registered in the public records' of every province.[2] Moreover, in all subsequent instructions, the further provision was inserted, in response to another petition from Gibson, 'that all laws against blasphemy, adultery, drunkenness, swearing, &c., be vigorously put in force'.

Having thus set his own colonial jurisdiction upon a secure basis, Gibson proceeded to appoint Commissaries in the various provinces, and to draw up an elaborate plan for regulating the legal procedure which they would be called upon to follow in the trials of immoral or irregular clergymen. This lengthy pamphlet, entitled 'Methodus procedendi contra clericos Irregulares in Plantationibus Americanis', begins by notifying the Commissary of his appointment and then sets out in detail certain important duties of the office. First, the Commissary must admonish privately any clergyman who should be found 'irregular in his life or negligent in the duties of his station', resorting to public or even judicial measures if the crimes were 'of a flagrant nature and also public and notorious', in which case he was required to proceed in a short and summary process according to the accompanying directions. For the purpose of hearing the case, he must choose two clergymen to

[1] 'A true State of the Bishop of London's Jurisdiction', Carte Papers, No. 310 (Bodl. lxxviii).

[2] A. L. Cross, op. cit., p. 60, with authorities quoted.

act as assistants, and except in serious cases, must pronounce the sentence of suspension *ab officio et beneficio* rather than that of deprivation, in order to give the guilty person time to repent. Secondly, he must hold an annual Visitation, at which the Bishop's directions were to be communicated to the clergy, and an account of the Visitation was to be sent to his lordship. Inquiries were to be instituted into the condition of churches and parsonages, and examination made of the licences and testimonials of all clergy officiating within the province. Reports were to be forwarded to the Bishop of the efforts of the temporal courts to suppress vice, according to the instruction to the Governors, and suggestions made as to the best means for improving the condition of the clergy. Finally, the Commissary must 'take all proper opportunities' to recommend to his clergy 'a loyal and dutiful behaviour towards the present Government, as vested in his Majesty King George and established in the illustrious House of Hanover', and a respectful obedience to the Governor, as the King's representative.

In addition to these general instructions, special directions were given concerning the method of proceeding against irregular clergy. The punishable irregularities varied from breaches of ecclesiastical discipline, such as officiating without a licence, or neglect of catechizing, to grave immoralities. In every case the trial was to be held in a church, and the prosecution conducted either by a promoter appointed by the commissary (i. e. *ex officio mero*) or by a voluntary accuser. In the latter case, the accuser was to deposit a sum of £20 'by way of security to pay costs, if he fail in the proof'. The process was to be summary, commencing with a citation under the Commissary's seal which was to be served on the party personally if possible, otherwise by 'a process *Viis et Modis*, to be hung on the church door where the said party officiates or on the door of the house wherein he dwells'. If he failed to appear, he should be pronounced contumacious and the proceedings should continue without him, i. e. the witnesses should be sworn, and examined, their depositions published, and a day assigned for the sentence. If the defendant appeared

and confessed, punishment should be inflicted 'according to the nature and quality of the offence, either by admonition, suspension or deprivation', and he should pay the costs. If he denied the charge, witnesses should be produced, sworn, and examined before 'a notary publick (if conveniently may be) or a person skilful in taking depositions', provision being made for compelling recalcitrant witnesses by ecclesiastical censure. The defendant was allowed forty-eight hours 'to inquire into the characters of the several witnesses and to frame such interrogations as he should think proper'. Before the depositions were published, he might, by his proctor or advocate, put in a defensive plea. If the proof advanced by the prosecution was not 'sufficient in law' the defendant was to be dismissed with costs. He had also the right of appeal, at any time within fifteen days, to the judges appointed by the King's Commission. The record of the trial was to be preserved in a book kept by the registrar.[1]

This method of procedure has been described at some length, because it not only illustrates the zeal with which Gibson took up his duties, but also represents his scheme for a judicial process, intended to be strictly ecclesiastical in almost every respect. The only secular element is the question of the costs, to recover which a civil suit might be required.

Although this scheme, the product of much industry and forethought, was worked out with such care and accuracy, it was little more than a paper constitution. Gibson had done what he could by securing an explicit definition of his authority, by appointing commissaries to exercise delegated jurisdiction, and by framing appropriate legal forms of procedure for their guidance. But his efforts were nullified by the practical impossibility of exercising ecclesiastical jurisdiction even over the clergy, in the Plantations. In the colonies in which the Establishment was not recognized, the Church had not developed sufficient strength to bear the weight of an ambitious organization of courts and officials. In the Royal Colonies, the chief

[1] Gibson, 'Methodus Procedendi contra clericos irregulares in Plantationibus Americanis'. This document is printed in full from the copy in the Fulham MSS. in Cross, op. cit., Appendix A, VI.

power in the parishes was in the hands of the respective vestries. Theoretically the candidates for clerical appointments were presented by the vestries and inducted by the Governor; and once they had secured induction, they enjoyed full legal possession. In practice the vestries neglected to present their ministers, and thereby secured a large measure of control over their speech and actions, by making them virtually removable at their will. Hence the shadowy authority of the Bishop of London was reduced to the granting of his licence to the clergy to officiate in a particular province, and the real power lay with the stubborn vestrymen. In the Proprietary Colonies the chief power was in the hands of the Proprietor by virtue of his right of presentation to all benefices. The apparent limitation placed on this power by the Governor's right of induction was nullified by the fact that the Governor was subject to appointment and removal by the Proprietor alone. Apart from his consent it was practically impossible for the commissary to exercise any authority in his colony. Once again the Bishop's only right was that of issuing a licence to the minister, for when the latter was safely inducted, neither the Bishop nor his Commissary could deprive him of the temporalities of his benefice. Their admonition might have moral weight, but it was void of legal or coercive force. A striking illustration of this anomalous situation is furnished by the province of Maryland.

'Lord Baltimore selected a clergyman in England and appointed him to a living; the Bishop of London gave him a licence, the Governor of the province inducted him; if he did wrong, the Commissary tried him, if there chanced to be a Commissary, and when convicted, *no power punished him*; for after his induction even his lordship the Proprietor could not remove him, and the Bishop of London, nominally his diocesan, could neither give nor take away the meanest living in the province.'[1]

Generally speaking, 'in the Royal Colonies the power of the diocesan was restricted enough, in the Proprietary it was

[1] Hawks, *Ecclesiastical Contributions*, ii (Maryland), p. 190, New York, 1839.

practically subject to the arbitrary will of the Proprietor'.[1] The duties of the absentee Bishop in such circumstances were necessarily confined to giving ghostly counsel and advice.

Gibson's connexion with the colonies involved him in a heavy correspondence. He was overwhelmed with letters from the missionary clergy who seemed to think it natural and just to appeal to him as the only authority, in all doubts and disputes. More than two thousand letters from them are preserved in the archives at Fulham Palace, and these constitute the chief source of information concerning the condition of the American churches. To the credit of Gibson it must be said that he answered the majority of them with care. During the long indisposition of Archbishop Wake, he took the Primate's place at the head of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, so that the complaints and petitions of the clergy abroad were addressed to him in his dual capacity as Bishop of the Colonies and acting President of the Venerable Society. Many of these letters were requests for Prayer Books, Bibles, ornaments for the churches, and religious tracts; others were applications for an increase of salary, and were laid by him before the Society. By this means, a unity of direction was achieved which was of great advantage to the distant ministers, while among the boxes of pamphlets which were dispatched to them, the various pastorals of Gibson found a place and so secured a considerable circulation in the New World.

Gibson had also the responsibility of providing English clergymen to supply the vacant parishes there, and of ordaining those young men who were sufficiently courageous to hazard the voyage from America to secure the episcopal commission. In order to regulate the number, and raise the quality of these colonial candidates he issued a public order, dated the 13th July 1743, declaring his intention not to ordain any person who did not present 'a testimony and recommendation' from the Commissary of his province, and 'an account from the same hand of the truth of his title', with particulars of the duty which he proposed to undertake and of the salary provided

[1] Cross, op. cit., p. 6.

for his maintenance.[1] This step was taken in consequence of the reiterated advice of the Commissaries, whose authority was frequently challenged by the appearance of clergymen who claimed to have received ordination at Gibson's hands, but of whose character they were entirely ignorant.

A rapid glance at the condition of the different groups of settlements will serve to illustrate the difficulties which hindered the progress of the Church, and the measures adopted by the Bishop to overcome them.

At the outset of his episcopate Gibson sent out a list of queries to be answered by the Commissary in each government, with a letter of exhortation, in which he assured the clergy that his sole purpose in seeking information of the state of the Plantations was to help forward the cause of the Church, and to improve the situation of its ministers. When the answers to his questions began to arrive, he understood the unhappy condition of the Church in those remote parts of his diocese. In the northern colonies it was quite evident that the Church was still struggling to secure a firm foothold. Mr. Samuel Myles, the Rector of King's Chapel, Boston, replied that there were only three Anglican clergy in Massachusetts, and that no Convention or Visitation had ever been held there. The Church indeed was ' only indulged as the Anabaptists and Quakers ', and was crippled financially by being compelled in many places to pay taxes to support the Independent ministers. The Episcopalian clergy were maintained partly by voluntary contributions, and partly by stipends from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. There were no parishes, but the ministers took possession of their livings by virtue of the licence of the Bishop of London without any induction by the Governor.[2] Unhappily also, the Church, in addition to being numerically small, was torn asunder by quarrels. Much trouble was being caused in Boston by the immoderate language of a certain layman, Mr. John Checkley, who besides his violent advocacy of the Episcopal Church was a high Tory with

[1] This Order is printed by Cross, op. cit., p. 63, from a copy in Fulham MSS.

[2] S. Myles to Bp. Gibson, 1 June 1724, Perry, *Historical Collections*, iii, pp. 149–50, 153–4.

Jacobite sympathies. He had been fined in 1724 for the publication of a rude attack upon non-episcopal congregations, but this had not diminished his zeal. Frequent appeals were made to Gibson to settle the dispute, and in a letter of the 3rd September 1724 he exhorted both parties to peace and unity. Wisely as well as cautiously, he refused to be drawn into the controversy, or to pronounce a definite verdict in favour of either side. He declared that 'the entring into a strict examination of all the particulars in order to see who was most to be blamed, would be a long work and . . . at that distance impracticable, but at best it would be a work of much time'. Therefore he could only urge the contestants 'to remember that they belonged to the same Church, and what was more, to a Church that was yet in its infancy, and in the midst of enemies'. But since the High Church zeal of some had drawn them into 'a dispute about the validity or invalidity of baptism administered by persons not episcopally ordained', he warned them that the same question had been 'set afoot here in England by the Non-Jurors some years since, and had bred great disturbance' until the Upper House of Convocation decided in favour of its validity. Consequently he stated plainly that 'if any missionary should renew the controversy, and advance the same opinion there that the Non-Jurors had advanced here, he would esteem him an enemy to the Church of England and the Protestant Succession, and would deal with him accordingly'.[1] These paternal counsels did not quieten the turbulent spirits, but Gibson refused to exercise a judicial power in the case.[2] Governor Burnet wrote to him, that the chief cause of bitterness seemed to consist in the circumstance that one of the ministers of King's Chapel, Mr. Harris, lived 'in a good neighbourly correspondence with the Dissenting ministers', whereas 'the others were always proving the reality of their conversion by their violence'.[3]

[1] Bp. Gibson to Mr. S. Myles, 3 Sept. 1724, Fulham MSS. Box, Massachusetts, Perry, ibid., pp. 166–7.

[2] Mr. D. Massom (Marblehead) to Gibson, 7 Jan. 1725/6, Fulham MSS., ibid.

[3] Governor Burnet to Gibson, 27 Nov. 1728, ibid. The notorious Mr. Checkley went to England in 1728 to secure ordination, but Gibson refused his application on the grounds of his being 'an enemy to the House of

Before this trouble had subsided, another and more serious incident had occurred. On the 27th May 1725 a Convention of New England Independent ministers petitioned the Governor, Council, and House of Representatives of Massachusetts for permission to hold a Synod, for the purpose of correcting certain abuses which had crept into the Church. On June 3rd the Council voted to grant the request, but on the 11th the House of Representatives decided to hold over the matter until the next session for further consideration, a decision which was accepted by the Governor and Council. When they met on the 19th, to consider it again, Mr. S. Myles and Mr. T. Cutler, Rectors of King's Chapel and Christ Church, Boston, respectively, presented a petition protesting against the holding of the Synod. Their objections were threefold: first, that since the ministers' petition made reference to the regular summons of Conventions in times past, at a period when the Episcopal Church was not planted in the colony, it was doubtful whether that Church was included in their scheme; secondly that if the Episcopal Church were excluded, 'it was disrespectful to them not to be consulted'; and thirdly, which was by far the most important reason, if they were included, the inclusion was 'very improper, being without the knowledge of their Rt. Rev. Diocesan', and they thought it 'neither dutiful to His Majesty King George, nor consistent with the rights of their Rt. Rev. Diocesan, to encourage or call the Synod until the pleasure of His Majesty should be known therein'. The irritation produced by this last objection was clearly shown in the action of the House of Representatives, which dismissed the protest as 'containing indecent reflections on the proceedings of that Board with several groundless insinuations'.

News of the affair soon crossed the Atlantic, and this affront to the Church stirred Gibson to immediate activity. His view of the matter was simple. If English Convocations could not

Hanover, to all other Christian denominations, and an uneducated man'. H. W. Foote, *Annals of King's Chapel*, Boston, 1882–96, 2 vols., i, p. 304. Checkley finally succeeded in being ordained in 1739, at the age of sixty, by the Bishop of Exeter with the connivance of Gibson.

meet, despite the weight of traditional authority for their proceedings, the presumptuous American Independents should certainly not be allowed to hold their Synod. He wrote at once to the Duke of Newcastle, informing him of the proposal and pointing out that 'there were two things which deserved to be considered; first, what the ministers might make of their being allowed to meet in a regular Synod; and next, whether the suffering the ministers of New England to hold a Synod would not be a fresh handle of complaint amongst those of the clergy here who were apt to clamour for a sitting Convocation?'[1] Four days later he sent a second letter, suggesting the doubt whether the Independents in New England, like the Nonconformists at home, were anything more than 'a tolerated people', in which case a 'double ill use' might be made of permitting them to establish synodal meetings'; 'the established clergy here might think it hard to be debarred of a liberty which was indulged the tolerated ministers there; and the tolerated ministers here might think it equitable that their privileges should not be less than those of their brethren in New England.'[2] The unwelcome possibility of the multiplication of ecclesiastical parliaments stimulated the Ministers of the Crown to action. Gibson's letters were submitted to the Attorney- and Solicitor-General for their opinion, and as a result, a letter of severe rebuke was dispatched to the Governor on the 7th October 1725. After expressing surprise 'that no account of so extraordinary and important a transaction' should have been sent officially to England, it proceeded to relate the opinion of the law officers, that they could find no legal warrant for the holding of Synods, which, even if they were lawful in themselves, could not be assembled without the authority of the Crown by virtue of His Majesty's Supremacy in ecclesiastical affairs. Moreover, the actual

[1] Gibson to the Duke of Newcastle, 17 Aug. 1725, Lambeth Palace MSS., American Colonies, 1123, i. 7; Perry, *Historical Collections*, iii (Massachusetts), p. 179. There can be no doubt that Gibson's reference is to the suspension of the Convocation of the Church of England, *not* to 'the English Dissenters in England who were clamouring for a sitting Convocation', as Dr. A. L. Cross (op. cit., p. 69) supposes.

[2] Same to same, 21 Aug. 1725, Perry, op. cit., p. 180.

application of the Independent ministers, being addressed not to the Governor alone, 'as representing the King's person', but to him and the Council and the House of Representatives, was 'a contempt of His Majesty's prerogative'. Finally, the Governor was commanded to 'put an effectual stop to any such proceedings'; and if the pretended Synod should be actually sitting 'to cause such their meetings to cease', and 'if notwithstanding such signification, they should continue to hold their assembly . . . to take care that the principal actors therein be prosecuted for a misdemeanour, but . . . to avoid doing any formal act to dissolve them, lest that might be construed to imply that they had a right to assemble'.[1] In point of fact the Synod had not assembled when the Governor received the letter, and he at once took steps to prevent its meeting.

The danger to the Church from this quarter was averted only to be replaced by another of a more serious character. At the same time as this attempt to establish an Independent Synod, the ecclesiastical peace had been further disturbed by the appearance in the Plantations of two Non-Juring Bishops. It will be necessary at a later stage to say something of the anomalous position of an Episcopal Church without an episcopate, which was the condition of the American Church until after the War of Independence; here it will suffice to observe that the presence of these two Non-Juror Bishops constituted a grave menace to the unity of the orthodox and loyal body. Commissary Henderson wrote to Gibson as early as the 16th August 1724, that the Church in Pennsylvania was greatly troubled by the activities of 'Mr. Talbot, the late minister of Burlington, who had returned from England two years ago in Episcopal Orders, though his Orders, till now of late, had been kept as a great secret', and of Dr. Welton who had arrived about six weeks ago and had secured a church in Philadelphia.[2] This last-named clergyman had been notorious in London as the minister of St. George's, Whitechapel, and had even carried

[1] C. Delafaye to the Governor of New England, 7 Oct. 1725, Perry, *Historical Collections*, iii. 189.

[2] Mr. Jacob Henderson to Bp. Gibson, 16 Aug. 1724, Fulham MSS. Box, Virginia, i.

over to America the tokens of his notoriety in the form of printed copies of his famous Altar Piece.[1] Mr. Henderson added the none too consolatory reflection that he feared that the intruders 'would poison the people of that province', since the faithful 'would rather take Confirmation from them than have none at all'.

A better report came from Maryland where it was not only said that the clergy 'being well affected to his present Majesty, King George, would have no regard to them',[2] but also that Talbot and Welton themselves had 'behaved very modestly and avoided talking much'.[3] In Philadelphia, however, much disturbance had been created. Mr. Talbot had 'convened all the clergy to meet, put on his robes, and demanded episcopal obedience from them', so that the Governor, Sir William Keith, had been compelled to intervene and order the church to be closed.[4] These reports convinced Gibson that the Non-Juror Bishops must be immediately suppressed. He laid the matter before the Duke of Newcastle, quoting extracts from the letters which he had received from Governor Burnet, Sir William Keith, and others, and pointing out that this was 'a step well judged and wisely taken by the enemies of the Government', because, by their administration of the episcopal offices, the Bishops would 'not fail to gain great respect so long as there were none else who could administer them', and so they would have opportunities 'to corrupt the people in their loyalty to the King'.[5] Becoming impatient of ministerial delay, Gibson sent a further remonstrance on the 11th June 1725, urging 'that some resolution be speedily taken' in the matter, so that once again the law officers were called into consultation. On July 10th they presented their report, to the effect that 'the informations contained in the said extracts were very loose and general, and did not contain any evidence

[1] For reference to Dr. Welton's Altar Piece, see p. 235.

[2] Mr. Christopher Wilkinson to Bp. Gibson, 9 Sept. 1724, Fulham MSS., Virginia, i.

[3] Same to same, 15 June 1726, ibid., Box, Maryland.

[4] Mr. Philip Stubbs to Bp. Gibson, 16 April 1725, quoting a letter from Mr. Jno. Urmiston, Maryland, of 29th Sept. 1724: Fulham MSS., Box, Pennsylvania and Philadelphia.

[5] Gibson to the Duke of Newcastle, 4 June 1725, S. P. Dom. Geo. I, B. 56.

of particular facts against the persons mentioned which might be the foundation of a prosecution'; but that if the charge against them of claiming the exercise of episcopal powers could be proved, it might be 'an offence punishable in the province where it was committed, as a high contempt, and misdemeanour' against His Majesty's Ecclesiastical Supremacy. Most of the offences noticed would be punishable by ecclesiastical censures, 'if there were any proper ecclesiastical jurisdiction in the province where they were done'.[1] The Government decided, therefore, that the simplest course of action would be to serve the intruding Bishops with writs commanding them to return to England, and on the 18th April 1726 Sir William Keith informed Gibson that Dr. Welton, in pursuance of the order, had left for Europe about four weeks ago.[2] Mr. Talbot was allowed to stay under promise of good behaviour.

The disturbance caused by the Non-Jurors quickly subsided, as that of the Independent ministers' synod had done. In both cases the Administration had been spurred to action by the insistent protests of Gibson, but their zeal had not extended beyond a prohibitive act. Except in a negative sense, the Church had derived no benefit from their intervention. Nothing positive had been done to help forward the cause of religion. The problems of faith and morals with which the synod was intended to deal remained unsolved, and no loyal bishops were sent to perform episcopal functions in the colonies. The sporadic interferences of the British Government tended to have a paralysing rather than a stimulating effect on religious organizations.

In New England the Church continued its difficult struggle for existence. Mr. Samuel Johnson wrote to his diocesan from Stratford that the Episcopal Communion was very much despised in his colony, the rulers of which did not allow any persons who were unwelcome to them to acquire land or settle in the colony, so that 'by this means several professors of the Church, for no other crime than their profession, had been

[1] Report of Sir Philip Yorke, S. P. Dom., B. 57.
[2] Keith to Gibson, 18 April 1726, Fulham MSS., ibid.

prevented from settling there'.[1] Within the Church itself there were frequent disputes. The parish of Christ Church, Philadelphia, was the scene of a bitter quarrel in 1732 between Mr. Cummings, the rector, and his assistant, Mr. Peters. The latter had been expelled from England for bigamy, and on arriving in America had propagated Deistical principles in Philadelphia, where he had raised up a schism in the congregation against the rector, who thereupon demanded his resignation. In answer to an appeal that he would settle the matter, Gibson wrote to Mr. Cummings expressing his satisfaction 'that the persons who espoused his cause were communicants, whereas several on the other side were not so', and observing that during the eleven years of his incumbency, no complaint had been made against him, but he had given 'every satisfaction in his conduct both as minister of that church and as Commissary'. With regard to Peters, the Bishop had been assured 'that when he married his second wife, he had just ground to believe that his first was dead', and that he 'had no conversation with the second after he knew the first was alive'. In the present circumstances his lordship decided 'so far to suspend his former consent, as to desire that it might not be pleaded for Mr. Peters' entering upon any duty' under the rector against the latter's inclination and consent.[2] Gibson addressed a communication to the Vestry also, in which he observed that he was not 'sufficiently prepared to make a judgement' on the actual dispute, 'further than as a regular behaviour for so many years was a fair presumption in favour' of Mr. Cummings, and that 'every minister was entitled to deference and respect from his assistants'. He added an earnest exhortation to peace and unity, 'not only as Christians and members of the same congregation, but as their divisions, if they continued, must in a little time be the ruin of their Church'.[3]

[1] Mr. S. Johnson to Bp. Gibson, 25 Sept. 1728, Fulham MSS., Box, New York, Rhode Island, New Jersey, New Hampshire.

[2] Bp. Gibson to Mr. A. Cummings, ibid., Box, Pennsylvania and Philadelphia.

[3] Bp. Gibson to the Vestry of Christ Church, Philadelphia, 28 Sept. (1732), ibid.

The case of Mr. Peters was not by any means a unique instance of indiscipline. Mr. Cummings as Commissary had occasion to complain to his diocesan of the intrusion into his province of 'several strolling clergymen, who had fled from Ireland and from the southern provinces, without any credentials and under bad characters',[1] whilst the ineffectiveness of his commissarial jurisdiction was so evident that 'the laity laughed at it, and the clergy seemed to despise it'.[2] In such circumstances the Church could make little headway. It was only in 1743, after several years of energetic, but hitherto unavailing, protests on the part of Gibson, that the clergy secured, through the instrumentality of Shirley, the Governor of Massachusetts, the passage of a perpetual Act providing that the taxes levied on Episcopalians should be applied to the support and maintenance of their own Church.[3] The ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Bishop, however, continued to be merely nominal, for the colonies of New England were an unpromising soil in which to plant the seeds of an ecclesiastical discipline.

A more hopeful prospect seemed to be afforded in Maryland, where the membership of the Church was relatively larger than in any other province, but the possibility of steady progress was destroyed by the fatal confusion between the rights of the Proprietor and the Bishop, which proved a fruitful source of conflict and misunderstanding. Reference has been made already to the slender authority of the Bishop unless he were supported by Lord Baltimore, and the evil consequences of this dual control were soon evident. Mr. Jacob Henderson, who was Commissary of the Western Shore, was accustomed to hold an annual Convention of the clergy, at which he conferred with them concerning the duties and difficulties of their office, and exhorted them to diligence and perseverance. But he did not attempt to exercise any coercive jurisdiction.[4] His

[1] Mr. A. Cummings to Bp. Gibson, 12 Aug. 1728, Fulham MSS., Box, Pennsylvania and Philadelphia.

[2] Mr. R. Jenney to Bp. Sherlock, 23 May 1751, ibid.

[3] A. L. Cross, op. cit., p. 71. Previous laws had been passed affording only temporary relief.

[4] Perry, *Historical Collections*, iv (Maryland), p. 131.

colleague of the Eastern Shore, Mr. Wilkinson, however, had made personal Visitations of the parish churches to examine their condition and advise necessary repairs, and had cited the churchwardens to appear at the general Convention with their presentments. Upon their appearance he had proceeded 'after the same manner used in the Spiritual Courts in England, as near as the circumstances of the country would permit', and himself believed that a visible reformation had been accomplished by his ecclesiastical censures.[1] His authority did not extend far, for in 1724 the Lower House of the Maryland Assembly discussed a proposal to erect 'a Jurisdiction for the better government of the Church and Clergy', and to entrust this power to laymen, and the motion was only defeated by the intervention of Governor Calvert in the interest of the Bishop of London, on the ground that the clergy were under his lordship's inspection.[2]

In 1730 Gibson appointed Henderson to be Commissary of the Eastern as well as the Western Shore, but this energetic reformer found his authority hindered by many obstacles. In particular he was afraid to embark upon any judicial process until he had received an exemplification of the Royal Commission to his Diocesan. A copy of the Commission granted by George I was in his possession, but that of course was obsolete. Already on the 10th January 1729/30 Gibson had complained to the Duke of Newcastle that 'a difficulty [had been] raised by some of the Governors abroad about his Commission for the Plantations, that they had no authentic notice of it', and in a subsequent letter he had protested vigorously that nobody before him had been 'content to go through so many difficulties for a Commission that, instead of being beneficial, brought with it so much trouble, and was not without expense'.[3] Despite these appeals, the dispatch of the Commission was delayed, or if dispatched, it was either lost at sea or suppressed by the Governor. In consequence Mr. Henderson could exercise no control over the undisciplined clergy of Maryland. At his

[1] Ibid., pp. 244–6.
[2] Ibid., pp. 249–50.
[3] Gibson to the Duke of Newcastle, 10 and 20 Jan. 1729/30, S. P. Dom, Geo. II, B. 17.

Visitation of 1730, one Mr. Urmiston actually appeared in a drunken condition, yet the Commissary could not proceed against him for fear of a prohibition, although the offender's behaviour was a public scandal.[1] So great were the difficulties which beset him, that Henderson wrote that he was 'quite tired out with the opposition he met with and nothing to support him, so that he humbly begged his lordship either to send his Commission under the Broad Seal . . . or to excuse him [Henderson] from having any further concern with it'.[2] Finally, in 1734, he resigned the office in despair.

In addition to these obstacles, another occasion of stumbling came from the absolute powers claimed by Lord Baltimore, who exercised his right to appoint to benefices, by preferring 'two clergymen, who were driven from Virginia for immoralities', to the great scandal of the Church in his province.[3] In 1733 his lordship visited the colony and, though treating Henderson with courtesy and respect, nevertheless 'thought it his right by his charter to order all affairs of church discipline within the bounds of his country'.[4] Such proceedings on the part of Lord Baltimore naturally provoked the Bishop of London, and the result was an open quarrel between them, which produced even more disastrous consequences in the colony. The Proprietor preferred clergy to whom Gibson refused to grant his licence, and one of them in particular used his situation to abuse the Bishop and to gather round himself a following of malcontents.[5] The Commissary was 'in a great measure suspended by the Governor from the execution of his office, so that the religious condition of the clergy went from bad to worse'.[6] After the resignation of Henderson, no successor was appointed, and from this time onwards 'the theoretical jurisdiction of the Bishop of London had no basis in fact' in the province of Maryland.[7]

[1] Henderson to Gibson, 24 June 1730, Fulham MSS., Box, Maryland.
[2] Same to same, 13 March 1731/2, ibid.
[3] Same to same, 27 Oct. 1730, ibid.
[4] Same to same, 5 June 1733, Perry, *Historical Collections*, iv (Maryland), p. 312.
[5] Same to same, 25 April 1735, Fulham MSS., Box, Maryland.
[6] Address of the clergy of Maryland to Bp. Sherlock, 27 Aug. 1753, ibid.
[7] Cross, op. cit, p. 78.

Only less restrictive than the authority of the Proprietor in Maryland was the tyranny of the Vestry in Virginia. 'The Nestor among American Commissaries',[1] Mr. Blair of Virginia, in his answers to Gibson's inquiries affirmed that there were 'not above four ministers in all that country that were inducted; the rest officiated like chaplains, without any assurance of holding their livings, but during their good behaviour and the good graces of the vestry'. He also observed that Conventions, which had formerly been held every year, were now summoned 'only upon extraordinary occasions, as the accession of a King or a Bishop'; and that the greatest need of the Virginian Church was a constant and well-regulated supply of worthy ministers.[2] Here as elsewhere ecclesiastical discipline was exceedingly lax. Blair had deemed it prudent to proceed always with caution, refraining from any attempt to deal with the excesses of the laity, and in regard to the clergy, 'unless they were notoriously scandalous, he had found it necessary to content himself with admonitions, for if he laid them aside by suspension, he had no unprovided clergy to put in their place'.[3] Indeed, for want of other and better ministers, he was obliged to tolerate and retain those he had. Gibson attempted to solve the problem of inductions by petitioning the King to instruct the Governors, in case of neglect of presentation by parishes, to collate and induct suitable clerks *jure devoluto*, after the lapse of a period of eighteen months from the occurrence of the vacancy. But Governor Gooch, who was very favourable to the Church, and worked well with Gibson to forward its progress, wrote in 1727 that 'the time was not yet come, in which it would be proper to propose the inducting of ministers', though he was trying to prepare the country for it.[4] It does not appear that he was able to effect this reform,[5] though in another direction his activities resulted, in 1730, in the passing of an Act for the suppression of vice, and especially gross immorality, by which

[1] Ibid., p. 78.
[2] Blair, 'Answers to Queries', 17 July 1724, Fulham MSS., Maryland.
[3] Blair to Gibson, 10 Feb. 1723, ibid.
[4] Gooch to Gibson, 18 Oct. 1727, Fulham MSS., Box, Virginia 2.
[5] A. L. Cross, op. cit., p. 79.

the Civil Courts secured a greater power to deal with such offences.[1] The Church in Virginia, however, though its external peace was not broken by any violent disputes, continued to lose rather than to gain ground. 'As years went by, the Establishment steadily lost ground, . . . and cognisance of spiritual affairs came more and more into the hands of the Governor and Council.'[2] Not only was Blair feeling the burden of age and allowing more laxity in ecclesiastical discipline, but there were already signs of that growing spirit of alienation between the clergy and the laity, which in later times wrought so much harm to the Church in that colony.

The affairs of the Church in Carolina were directed by a much more vigorous and energetic Commissary, Mr. Alexander Garden, who had held regular annual Visitations of his clergy since his appointment, and supplemented them by a special Convention whenever any extraordinary business required. He had been diligent at these assemblies in examining Letters of Ordination and Licences, in hearing complaints and regulating disorders, in transmitting the Bishop's instructions with suitable exhortations, and he had prepared faithful and regular accounts of the condition of the Church for his Diocesan and for the Venerable Society.

Garden's zeal for the preservation of order and the correction of irregularities by ecclesiastical censures, has been chiefly remembered by his spirited attempt to prosecute Whitefield in his own commissarial court. The spread of Methodism to America had been preceded by the evangelistic preaching of Jonathan Edwards, the pastor of the Puritan church at Northampton (Mass.), who had already kindled the embers of that religious revival which is known as the 'Great Awakening'. Previous to this, however, Mr. Garden had made the acquaintance of John Wesley and Whitefield, when they had come over on their first missionary expedition to Georgia; and when Wesley had returned to England after the unhappy episode with Mrs. Williamson, the Commissary had written to his diocesan that, generally, 'no one could be more approved,

[1] Blair to Gibson, 20 July 1730, Fulham MSS., Box, Virginia 2.
[2] Cross, op. cit., p. 79.

better liked or better reported of,' than Wesley had been, until he committed this indiscretion, concerning which, ' however he might not be acquitted of some imprudence and unguarded conversation, yet he [Garden] verily believed him innocent of anything criminal either in fact or intention ', whilst the other charges were ' all either impertinent, false or frivolous '.[1] On the occasion of Whitefield's first visit also, Garden had received him ' in a most Christian manner ', and had impressed the Methodists as being ' a good soldier of Jesus Christ '.[2] By the time of his second visit, however, Whitefield had developed enthusiastic and radical tendencies, which made him a dangerous and disturbing force in the colonies. It was, indeed, natural that the American Church should prove impotent before him. If it had not been possible to impose restraints upon him in England, it could hardly be expected that the authority of the Commissaries would impede his itinerancy in the Plantations. From colony to colony he travelled, producing in each a ferment of excitement and enthusiasm.

Alarming reports of the confusion which prevailed almost everywhere were sent to the harassed Diocesan. In Pennsylvania it was said that ' by his indecent way of haranguing the populace he seemed to debase the dignity of religion, and by gathering together a dirty crowd in the dark night to hear him, he acted the part of a Merrie Andrew in things sacred '.[3] Mr. Cummings, the Commissary, wrote from Philadelphia that ' the warm application ' of the people and their ' great anxiety ' to hear the preacher, compelled him ' for peace sake to allow Whitefield the use of the pulpit, after he had first made him read the public offices '. Also he had warned the Methodist in private conversation of ' the evil consequences of his doctrine and conduct ', but found he ' had little of the scholar and gentleman ', and in short was ' enthusiastically mad '.[4] On his reappearance in the city in the following year, the disturbance was even greater. Cummings declared that ' had he

[1] Garden to Gibson, 22 Sept. 1737, Fulham MSS., Box, S. Carolina.
[2] Tyerman, *Life of Whitefield*, i, p. 143.
[3] Mr. Alexander Howie to Gibson, 14 Sept. 1739, Fulham MSS., Box, Pennsylvania and Philadelphia.
[4] Mr. A. Cummings to Gibson, 17 Nov. 1739, ibid.

not been an ear and eye-witness to the strange fascination of enthusiasm, he could hardly have believed how catching it was'. Whitefield had railed against the Bishop of London, and though he had not done so much harm in Virginia and Maryland where the Church was established, 'in those parts where it was discouraged, he played his game successfully'.[1] In Connecticut and Massachusetts, similar scenes of excitement were witnessed. Dr. Cutler reported that the intruder had preached 'in conventicles, commons and open places, where he was always thronged, and seldom by less than thousands, two, five, eight and at his farewell by not less than twenty-thousand'.[2] When he arrived at Northampton, the centre from which the Great Awakening had radiated, the enthusiasm reached a climax. 'While he was there, the face of things was quite altered: little business went forward, people were always flocking to him, and he was the subject of all talk, and to speak against him was neither credible nor scarce safe.' The usual consequences ensued. The zeal for preaching became infectious, so that 'ruling elders, deacons and other illiterate mechanicks neglected or laid aside their callings', and the multiplication of lectures destroyed all authority, both of masters over servants, and of parents over children. 'Here children and servants strolled, withdrawing themselves from family and subjection, and day labourers spent much of their time, expecting notwithstanding full wages', and the preachings were 'attended with hideous yellings, and shameful revels', so that 'much wickedness was justly feared to be the consequence of them'.[3]

Further south, in Carolina, Mr. Garden was endeavouring to grapple with the same problem. He had observed in Whitefield on the occasion of his first visit, 'a dash of the fanatical phrase in his discourse, and a tendency towards some dogmatical notions that prevailed in the Oliverian times', but

[1] Mr. Cummings to Gibson, 29 Aug. 1740, Fulham MSS., Box, Pennsylvania and Philadelphia. He adds the characteristic observation: 'I doubt not but he [Whitefield] is underhand supported by ye Deists, or Jesuits, or both.'

[2] Dr. T. Cutler to Bp. Gibson, 5 Dec. 1740, Fulham MSS., Box, Massachusetts.

[3] Same to same, 14 Jan. 1741/2, ibid.

now the enthusiast ' gave himself such liberties in accusing the clergy of false doctrine, hypocrisy and neglect of duty ', that it was evident that conciliatory measures were no longer adequate.[1] Two methods of defence were possible to the clergy. They could attempt to counteract the influence of Whitefield by speaking against his doctrines. Dr. Cutler ' thought it his duty, as mildly as he could, to bear witness against Whitefield's opinions and practices, and had no thanks from many within and without the Church '.[2] Mr. Garden did the same, but the ineffectiveness of preaching was apparent everywhere. Therefore Garden determined to act boldly, by the exercise of his commissarial jurisdiction against the intruder. On the 11th July 1740 he issued a citation to Whitefield to appear before him, and on the 15th the trial was opened.[3] The defendant challenged the authority of the court on several grounds, especially on the ground that, as a resident of Georgia, he was beyond the scope of Garden's jurisdiction. He observed also that ' though he had preached in the fields near London, the Bishop had never attempted to exercise such authority over him '. Accordingly he presented a *recusatio judicis* on the following day ; and a dispute arose as to who should pass judgement on the *recusatio*. Whitefield requested that it should be referred to six arbitrators, three to be chosen by each party, but this was rejected by the Commissary, owing to the difficulties connected with a Board of such doubtful legality. Thereupon the defendant appealed to the English authorities, taking an oath before the Commissary to lodge his appeal within twelve months, and depositing ten pounds as a guarantee for the observance of his oath. He also wrote to Bishop Gibson informing him that he had ' appealed, according to law, to four of His Majesty's commissioners for reviewing appeals, to know whether the Commissary ought not to have accepted a *recusatio judicis*, which he lodged in the court ', and requesting his lordship's opinion as to whether

[1] Garden to Gibson, 24 April 1740, Fulham MSS., Box, Carolina and Georgia.
[2] Cutler to Gibson, 5 Dec. 1740, Fulham MSS., Box, Massachusetts.
[3] This summary description of the trial is taken from the detailed account in Tyerman, *Life of Whitefield*, i, pp. 359–64, and Cross, op. cit., pp. 80–6.

Garden's court had any authority over clergy of the province of Georgia.[1]

It is not necessary here to trace the confusing story of the failure of Whitefield's appeal in England. It must suffice to say that it never came to an issue, and that after the lapse of seventeen months from the date of the appeal, Garden proceeded to take up the case again. He cited Whitefield to appear, and on his failure to obey the summons, examined witnesses, and, finding the accused guilty of preaching in Dissenting meeting-houses and conducting services without using the forms prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer, pronounced against him the sentence of suspension from the exercise of his functions as a minister of the Church of England. The interest of the verdict is purely academic, for Whitefield fulfilled his promise to pay no more regard to the suspension than to a Pope's bull, and the disappointed Commissary dare not proceed to excommunication. In the beginning of 1749 Garden resigned his office, and by that time the supervision of the colonies had passed into the hands of Sherlock, who succeeded Gibson at London.[2]

In the islands, the condition of the Church was even less satisfactory than in the mainland colonies. Mr. Commissary Gordon reported from Barbadoes that he had never held any Visitation, nor called any Convention, and only on two occasions had attempted to exercise any judicial power.[3] The island was full of immorality and irreligion, white men indulging in the most degrading debauchery with negro women, and every form of intemperance and excess being openly practised. In such circumstances the voice of reproof was exceedingly unwelcome, and Gordon found himself the object of fierce hostility. His office was ' laid hold of as a handle to do him the grossest injuries, and throw more dirt at him than he

[1] Whitefield to Gibson, 8 Sept. 1740, Fulham MSS., quoted in Cross, op. cit., p. 83.

[2] In order to understand the attitude of hostility and vexation which Gibson assumed towards the Methodists in his Pastoral Letters, it is necessary to remember the distress and confusion which they caused to the Church in America.

[3] Gordon to Gibson, ' Answers to Queries ', Fulham MSS., Box, Barbadoes.

believed it possible for malice itself to invent '.[1] He could not venture to inflict ecclesiastical censures, and on the whole the Church was in a state of great depression and subjection. Nor were its prospects much brighter in Jamaica, where the Commissary had also to confess that he had never held any Visitation, and that he had ' very little, if any, power '.[2] The clergy recognized little superior authority, and gave themselves up to trade, secular callings, and dice. The lawyers of the island stoutly resisted any claim to ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and it was only in 1748 that an Act was passed to improve the stipends of the clergy, and to recognize the jurisdiction of the Bishop of London ' so far as pertained to the ecclesiastical regimen of the clergy only '.[3]

In addition to the above-mentioned obstacles in the Plantations, Gibson's task during the last decade of his life was rendered more difficult by his withdrawal from close connexion with the S. P. G. Upon the appointment of Potter to the Primacy in 1737, Gibson withdrew from the position of Acting President of the Society which he had held during the long indisposition of Archbishop Wake, and ' kept from the Council table, where the business of the Plantations was chiefly transacted '.[4] He instructed his Commissaries in those provinces where missionaries were maintained by the Venerable Society, to send all applications with regard to their work either to the Primate, or to the Board of the Society through the Secretary, and furthermore not to prosecute any such ministers for immorality or neglect of duty without having first communicated with the Society.[5] The severance of the close connexion which had subsisted between Gibson and the S. P. G. and the gradual coldness which sprung up, were ' far from being of service ' to the Colonial Church, and were regretted both by the missionaries and the authorities at home.[6]

[1] Gordon to Gibson, 30 June 1724, ibid.
[2] W. May to Gibson, ' Answers to Queries ', ibid., Box, Jamaica.
[3] Same to same, 1748, ibid.
[4] Governor Glen to Gibson, 15 May 1748, Fulham MSS., Box, S. Carolina.
[5] R. Vesey to Gibson, 10 Nov. 1738, ibid., Box, New York, Rhode Island, &c.
[6] R. Jenny to Bp. Sherlock, 27 June 1749, ibid., Box, Pennsylvania; R. Price to Gibson, 19 Dec. 1737, Box, Massachusetts; Mr. H. Newman

Besides the special problems of religious organization in each particular group of settlements, there were certain wider questions, affecting the welfare of the entire Episcopal Church in the Plantations, to which Gibson could not be indifferent. Such were the scheme of Dean Berkeley to establish a college in Bermuda, the problem of the negro slaves, and the oft-discussed project for the establishment of a regular colonial episcopate.

The first Englishman who realized the vast possibilities of the new continent was Dean Berkeley. The plan suggested itself to him of the foundation of a Seat of Learning there, which should ensure that this New World would be built on the twin foundations of true religion and sound learning. Accordingly he proposed to establish a college in the island of Bermuda, and solicited donations from all his friends in the Old World. Bishop Gibson supported his scheme before the Government, presenting to them an official report in which he expressed his opinion that it was 'a design highly commendable, and such as deserved His Majesty's encouragement, and that, according to the best judgement he was able to make, there was great probability of its having the intended effects and answering all that was proposed by it'.[1] Influenced by his cordial advocacy, the Ministry promised to give the sum of £20,000 towards its establishment, and Berkeley departed for America with confident hopes. It was one thing to secure a promise of assistance, another to hold the Administration to their bond, and Gibson could not secure the payment of the money. Pretext upon pretext was brought forward to excuse the delay until at length 'tired of official excuses and evasions, he pressed for a definite issue to the negotiations and promises of so many years'. A conclusive answer was at last given to him. 'If you put this question to me as a Minister,' said

(S. P. C. K.) to Gibson, 10 March 1737/8, Box, Massachusetts; cf. Gibson to the Duke of Newcastle, 27 Nov. 1739: 'The Archbishop of Canterbury is President of the Society. I did indeed execute the office for some years during the indisposition and absence of the late Archbishop, but have had no concern in it since the time of his death.' S. P. Dom. Geo. II, B. 48.

[1] Gibson to Townshend, 6 March 1724/5, S. P. Dom. Geo. I, B. 55.

Walpole, 'I must and can, assure you that the money shall undoubtedly be paid, as soon as suits with public convenience; but if you ask me as a friend, whether Dean Berkeley should continue in America, expecting the payment of £20,000, I advise him by all means to return home to Europe and to give up his present expectations.'[1] Upon receipt of this communication, Berkeley wrote to Gibson that 'Sir Robert Walpole's answer left him no room to deliberate what he had to do, and therefore he would prepare to get back as soon as possible'. He was bitterly disappointed at the failure of his scheme, but had long ago realized its inevitability, and had become 'tired out with discouragements and delay, which had proved as fatal to the college as an absolute refusal'.[2] The lukewarmness of the Ministry had resulted in thwarting the idealistic designs of the philosophic dean and the practical proposals of the episcopal administrator.

Bishop Gibson was moving solely within the religious sphere, however, when he addressed himself to the problem of the conversion of the negro slaves in the Plantations. His inquiries into the condition of the Colonial Churches had revealed to him a startling state of affairs in regard to the slave population. He had found 'their numbers prodigiously great, and he was not a little troubled to observe how little progress had been made in a Christian country towards the delivering those poor creatures from pagan darkness and superstition'. More particularly he was sorry to learn that 'all attempts towards it had been by too many industriously discouraged and hindered', a circumstance which needed quickly to be altered.[3] He therefore published a letter to the masters and mistresses of families in the Plantations, exhorting them to remember their responsibility for the spiritual welfare of their slaves, and another to the missionaries, directing them to distribute copies

[1] A. C. Fraser, *Works of Berkeley*, iv, p. 186.

[2] Berkeley to Gibson, 15 March 1730/1, Fulham MSS., Box, Bermuda.

[3] Gibson, 'Two Letters of the Bishop of London: the first to Masters and Mistresses of Families in the English Plantations abroad, exhorting them to encourage and promote the instruction of their Negroes in the Christian Faith; the Second to Missionaries there: directing them to distribute the said letter and exhorting them to give their assistance towards the instruction of the Negroes within their several parishes', London, 19 May 1727.

of the former letter to slave-owners, and to co-operate with them in the work of evangelization.

In his address to the masters and mistresses, Gibson criticized trenchantly the excuses alleged in extenuation of their neglect of duty in this respect. He brushed aside the supposition that the negroes were necessarily of licentious behaviour and could never be raised to the moral standard of Christians. He affirmed that the difficulty of language might be overcome by instructing a few of the more intelligent slaves first, leaving them to proselytize the rest, and by ensuring that the children were taught to understand English and to comprehend the elements of the Christian Faith. He stated dogmatically that no Christian master should deny his negroes 'the means and opportunities of instruction', nor 'permit them to labour on the Lord's Day, and least of all, put them under a kind of necessity of labouring on that day to provide themselves with the conveniencies of life'. In answer to the anticipated objection that 'no time could be spared from the daily labour and employment of negroes' for purposes of piety, he declared that this was 'in effect to say, that no consideration of propagating the Gospel of God was to make the least abatement from the temporal profit of the masters', an attitude which was sufficiently rebuked by considering the greatness of the profit which they derived from their slaves, out of which it would not be unreasonable to expect that the owners would voluntarily contribute towards the work of conversion. In reply to the argument that the slaves would embrace Christianity simply as a means of claiming equality with their masters, and would use it as a pretext for rebellion against them, Gibson asserted that the baptism of the negroes would not in the least affect their civil status, but that their masters could still exercise those 'degrees of strictness and severity that fairly appeared necessary for the preserving subjection and government', though inhumanity and wanton cruelty would be forbidden. He argued that Christianity would inculcate greater diligence in the slaves by inspiring them to discharge their duties through a sense of moral obligation and not through fear. Finally he exhorted the owners 'to con-

sider themselves not only as masters, but as Christian masters', to regard their negroes 'not barely as slaves, upon the same level with labouring beasts, but as men slaves and women slaves', and in this connexion especially, to treat them with humanity and to attract them to Christianity by their own example. The missionaries were briefly directed to distribute copies of the first letter, enforcing its arguments with practical considerations of their own, and to co-operate in every possible way with the owners in the work. In addition to these letters Gibson issued a public appeal to 'all serious Christians' at home to support the S.P.G. by liberal donations, in order to train and equip catechists to prepare the negroes for baptism.[1] This duty he charged upon their consciences, both as they were Christians and Protestants, and also in their capacity as Englishmen, remembering that the negroes 'were truly a part of our nation, living under the same Government with ourselves, and contributing much by their labour to the support of our Government, and the increase of the trade and wealth of the kingdom'.

It is clear from these publications of Gibson that he was anxious to promote the conversion of the slaves, but it is hardly surprising to learn that only a very small measure of success attended the efforts made. The Bishop himself could exercise no personal influence or authority in the matter, nor was the Colonial Church able to undertake the task which he had set before it. So long as its clergy were few, and their position insecure, their energies were absorbed in the struggle to maintain a precarious existence. Only when the Church had established its own position firmly, and had succeeded in civilizing the rude manners of the English colonists, could it undertake the conversion of the negroes. Consequently the work went ahead very slowly; in some places indeed enthusiastic clergymen devoted themselves with genuine ardour to the task and succeeded in influencing a small group of slaves; in others the appeal of Gibson to masters and mistresses did

[1] Gibson, 'An Address to Serious Christians among ourselves, to assist the S.P.G. in carrying on the work of instructing the Negroes in our Plantations abroad.'

not fall on deaf ears, and a few owners made sporadic attempts to improve the lot of their slaves; but on the whole, it could hardly be maintained that any real progress was made.

In Maryland the energetic Commissary, Henderson, devoted a considerable part of his Visitation Charge of 1730 to the discussion of the Church's duty in the matter. He observed 'in what a clear light and how pathetically' Gibson's letters had pressed the obligation upon their consciences, but, whilst recognizing the responsibilities of the clergy, he declared that 'it could not be expected that they should become schoolmasters and tutors' to the negroes, since it would be 'inconsistent with several branches of their ministerial function'. He recommended, however, that they should urge all slave-owners to provide opportunities for instruction, and that the ministers themselves should attend in their churches every Sunday afternoon in the summer to teach such as were sent to them.[1] In the following year, at his Visitation, he inquired concerning the progress of the work. The reports varied greatly according to the zeal of the individual clergy, but there was a general consensus of opinion that little could be done so long as the masters were largely indifferent, if not definitely hostile.[2] From Virginia Mr. Blair reported that Gibson's letter had 'put several masters and mistresses upon the instruction' of their negroes, but he feared that the majority of the slaves 'little minded the serious part, and only were in hopes that they would meet with so much the more respect, and that some time or other Christianity would help them to their freedom'.[3] It was this inevitable tendency which really brought the attempt to an end. As Blair informed Gibson, notwithstanding all the precautions of the ministers 'to assure them that baptism altered nothing as to their servitude or other temporal circumstances, yet they were willing to feed themselves with a secret fancy that it did, and that the King designed that all Christians should be made

[1] Perry, *Historical Collections*, iv (Maryland), pp. 288–96, printed from Fulham MSS.
[2] Henderson to Gibson, 16 June 1731, Fulham MSS., Box, Maryland.
[3] Blair to Gibson, 28 June 1729, ibid., Virginia 2.

free'. Finally repression had to be employed to quell an incipient revolt.[1]

The problem of the negroes was even more serious in the island colonies, where their numbers were larger and their degradation worse. In Barbadoes the Bishop's letter and influence moved the managers of the S.P.G. plantations, though unwillingly, to give some attention to the conversion of their slaves; but the baptism of a small proportion of these was 'almost the only thing accomplished' there, since the inhabitants in general were against the proposal.[2] A similar reluctance to encourage the enterprise was shown in Jamaica, whilst Mr. Knox, the Commissary of Antigua, reported that the negroes were 'all heathens and like to continue so; there were no means used for their conversion', which was a thing 'rather to be wished than hoped or expected'.[3] His successor also, Mr. Bryan, more than a decade later confessed that though he had done what was in his power, he 'found it not blessed with any great success'.[4] Generally speaking, there was little prospect of any considerable progress. Despite Gibson's denunciations, the owners continued to work their slaves six days per week, thus compelling them to employ the seventh in necessary labour for their own sustenance; they continued to regard them as beasts of burden, except where they made them the victims of their own appetites and lusts; and until the Church could obtain a greater control over the activities of the English, it was vain to appeal for humanitarian treatment of their slaves.

The chief difficulty in all questions relating to the welfare of the Church in the Plantations arose from the distance which separated the Bishop of London from them. It was manifestly impossible for an absentee diocesan to accomplish any effective reform, or exercise any real supervision over the scattered parishes in the New World. As a matter of urgent practical necessity, a colonial episcopate was essential to the progress

[1] Same to same, 14 May 1731, ibid.

[2] Mr. Thos. Wilkie to Gibson, 7 March 1726/7; Mr. A. Holt to Gibson, 2 Dec. 1730, ibid., Box, Barbadoes.

[3] J. Knox to Gibson, 18 April 1732, ibid., Box, Leeward Islands.

[4] F. Bryan to Gibson, 16 June 1744, ibid.

of the American Church, to say nothing of the theoretical anomaly of an episcopal communion without a bishop. It is not necessary to dwell upon the disadvantages of the situation then existing; they were fully and repeatedly set forth in the constant stream of letters and petitions, public and private, individual and corporate, which flowed from the clergy to their spiritual pastor at Fulham. So long as the Colonial Church was deprived of resident bishops, no Confirmations could be performed, no discipline exercised over the ministers themselves, no vigorous administration organized, and, above all, no American ministry could arise, when the hazardous journey to England had to be undertaken if episcopal orders were to be secured.

These considerations had been emphasized for more than a quarter of a century; they were well understood by the several Bishops of London, and in justice to Gibson it is necessary to remove some misapprehension as to the attitude he took up in regard to this question. It is not the fact that he rested content with the imperfections of the existing system because 'he saw that the time was not yet ripe for the introduction of any other system, and so held his peace';[1] nor that he refrained from taking 'any decided steps to further the plan' of establishing a colonial episcopate.[2] On the contrary his actions fully justify his own statement to the American clergy that 'he had heartily laboured, though without success, to procure a settlement of two bishops in the Plantations, one for the continent and another for the islands'.[3]

Before examining the efforts of Gibson himself, it will be necessary briefly to recapitulate the previous attempts which had been made to secure the appointment of American bishops. 'The scheme of entrusting the government of the Church of England in America to resident bishops is almost as old as the jurisdiction of the Bishop of London.'[4] Archbishop Laud had developed a project for placing a bishop in New England,

[1] Cross, *The Anglican Episcopate and the American Colonies*, p. 87.
[2] Ibid., p. 103.
[3] Gibson to the Vestry of Christ Church, Philadelphia, n.d., Fulham MSS., Box, Pennsylvania and Philadelphia.
[4] Cross, op. cit., p. 88.

but the only result of his endeavour had been to associate episcopacy with prelacy in the minds of the Independents of the northern colonies. After the Restoration a definite proposal was made to consecrate Dr. Alexander Murray to be Bishop of Virginia, and the matter proceeded so far as the issue of Letters Patent, when it suddenly disappeared quite obscurely.[1] But from the time of the foundation of the S.P.G. there had been a series of attempts to secure this necessary institution, supported by the leaders of that Corporation at home, and petitioned for by the missionaries abroad. Under the sympathetic government of Queen Anne, their efforts came within an ace of complete success. Her Majesty had decided to grant the request of the Society, and a Bill had been drafted for introduction into Parliament, when her sudden death put a stop to further proceedings.[2] The petition was presented to the new Sovereign, in the hope that he would complete the formalities which were necessary to launch the scheme; but the pressure of more urgent political business, the instability of the general situation, and the peril of the Jacobite insurrection gave the Ministry little time and less inclination to consider a question so remote and academic. In consequence of this disappointment, the Society seemed to lose all its enthusiasm, and for the space of a generation the chief interest in the matter centres round the activities of the new Bishop of London.

Although it is certain that Gibson was an ardent advocate of the proposal, it is not possible to ascertain the details of the schemes he projected. From the very commencement of his connexion with the Plantations, the problem occupied his mind. In 1723 he communicated with Dr. Thomas Bray, who was delighted to discover such a powerful champion of his favourite scheme, and replied, with great cordiality, that 'it boded well that his lordship was so intent upon that excellent

[1] Secker, *Letter to Walpole* (1750), p. 17, says that the Letters Patent were discovered by Bishop Gibson, from whose papers he first heard of the proposal. There was also an interesting but abortive suggestion in the reign of Queen Anne to make Dean Swift Bishop of Virginia. Cross, op. cit., p. 92, with the authorities quoted there.

[2] Cross, op. cit., p. 101.

design . . . as to have found out what none of his predecessors had done, the patent prepared in King Charles II's reign for establishing a bishop in Virginia, and having found it, that he deliberated seriously upon that patent, so as to revise it, or form a new one upon the best plan that could be contrived'.[1] The plan which Gibson himself worked out was to consecrate two Suffragan Bishops for the Plantations, one to reside on the mainland, and the other in one of the islands of the West Indies.[2] It is not possible, however, to trace the story of its failure. That no result was attained is evident, but there are no hints even to suggest the method of its disappearance. Bishop Gibson was not daunted by his first defeat, and when the news reached him of the disturbance created in America by the two Non-Juring Bishops, he determined to take advantage of the opportunity to renew his application for the provision of 'orthodox and loyal' bishops. He submitted to Archbishop Wake the question as to 'how far this incident might be improved to the forwarding the design of sending bishops of our own to the Plantations';[3] and he wrote to the Duke of Newcastle urging that 'if two or three Suffragan Bishops were regularly consecrated here and sent to the Plantations, to administer episcopal offices to the clergy and people of the established Church before those two [Talbot and Welton] had spread their infection among them, this would be the most effectual way to put a stop to their attempts'.[4] The Government, however, contented themselves with issuing a prohibition against the intruders, and refused to accept the positive proposal.

Meanwhile, opinion in the Plantations continued to press for such a provision. When Dr. Cutler and Dr. Samuel Johnson visited England they had an interview with Gibson, and gave the testimony of eyewitnesses as to the necessity of establishing

[1] Dr. T. Bray to Bp. Gibson, 28th Oct. 1723, Fulham MSS., Box, Virginia 3.

[2] Bp. Gibson to Bp. White Kennet, 4 July 1724, Lansdowne MS. 1017; Bp. Kennet's Collections, vol lxxxiii, B.M.; Gibson to Dr. Bray, 15 July 1724, Fulham MSS., Box, S.P.G. Missions to America and West Indies.

[3] Gibson to Wake, 19 July 1725, Wake MSS., vol. xxiv, Plantations, &c.

[4] Gibson to the Duke of Newcastle, 11 June 1725, S. P. Dom. Geo. I, B. 56.

bishops in America. They were rejoiced to find his lordship 'of the same opinion with them'; but though he 'entered warmly into the affair', and 'continued to be zealous for such an establishment as long as he lived', yet he could never 'prevail with the Ministry to give the proposal the attention it deserved'.[1] In 1727, however, the matter nearly came to a head, when in response to the representations which reached him from Maryland, Gibson apparently determined to take decisive action. He sent for one Mr. Colebatch, a missionary of that province, described characteristically as 'a Whig and one of ye best of men',[2] to come over to London in order to receive his commission to act as suffragan bishop, but the authorities of the colony checked the attempt by issuing a writ *ne exeat regno*.[3] There is no evidence to determine whether the Bishop's contemplated action was supported by the assent of the home Government, or whether it was a heroic if desperate decision to cut the Gordian knot. At any rate it ended in failure, and henceforth it becomes even more difficult to trace the actual steps which were taken in this forlorn quest.

Upon the elevation of Potter to the Primacy in 1737, the colonists hoped that his star would be in the ascendant, and endeavoured to enlist his support in their cause. Gibson was again 'labouring much, but in vain, with the Court and Ministry and endeavouring to induce the Archbishop, who had credit with both, to join him in trying what could be done to get a bishop sent into the Plantations',[4] but nothing resulted from this new application. In 1740 Bishop Secker preached a sermon before the S.P.G. at its annual meeting, which created a revival of interest in the question, and brought it into the foreground again. Several conferences and discussions took place, and in 1745 the Primate and Gibson began to move

[1] T. B. Chandler, *Life of Dr. Samuel Johnson*, p. 38, New York, 1805.

[2] 'Character of the clergy in Maryland', 1722, Fulham MSS., Box, Virginia 3.

[3] Mr. Chris. Wilkinson to Gibson, 10 Dec. 1728, refers to the attitude of the authorities in preventing the departure of 'Mr. Colebatch by a *ne exeat*, whom your Lordship by Dr. Bray's letter had invited to be a Suffragan here', Fulham MSS., Box, Maryland; quoted by Hawks, *Ecclesiastical Contributions*, ii (Maryland), p. 196; Cross, op. cit., p. 105.

[4] Cross, op. cit., p. 105 (note).

actively in the matter. Dr. Samuel Johnson wrote, earnestly imploring them to spare no efforts 'in their fresh attempt to secure so great a blessing',[1] and an episcopal deputation waited on the Duke of Newcastle.[2] But again the business was delayed by the emergence of a political crisis; the Jacobite insurrection of 1745 diverted the attention of the Ministry to more urgent questions, and the proposal quietly disappeared. It was probably about this time that Gibson offered to the King and Council £1,000 towards the support of a bishop, in case one should be sent over in his time.[3] Neither this nor other benefactions could avail anything, and the Bishop had to relinquish his hopes of success. The best testimony to the efforts which he had made, and to the strength of the opposition which he had encountered, is furnished by the experience of his successor, Sherlock. Within a year of his appointment to the see of London, the latter was lamenting loudly that he had been 'induced to leave the quiet and easy see of Sarum', for his fatal mistake had been to suppose that he 'might have prevailed to have bishops already' for the Colonies.[4] To all his requests the Duke of Newcastle made answer that 'the appointing bishops in the West Indies was a great and national consideration, that had long been under the deliberation of great and wise men heretofore and had been by them laid aside';[5] or again, that it was 'a question which had been often agitated, and which the wisest and best men had hitherto not thought proper to determine in the way he proposed'.[6]

[1] Dr. S. Johnson to Bp. Gibson, 25 Nov. 1745, Fulham MSS., Box, Massachusetts.

[2] Abp. Potter to the Duke of Newcastle, 10 March 1745/6, B.M. Add. MS. 32706, f. 282.

[3] Cross, op. cit., p. 111. It is possible that some further explanation of Gibson's efforts to obtain a bishop in America may be contained in an elusive 'Letter and Memorial on sending bishops to the American Plantations Abroad' in the manuscripts of the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, of which there does not appear to be any printed copy in England. On the other hand, Dr. Cross, if he has seen this MS., has derived little information from it, and Dr. Hawks, in his essay in the *Protestant Episcopal Historical Society Collections* for 1851, refers to it, but does not give any new details. It may be merely Gibson's scheme of 1723.

[4] Sherlock to the Duke of Newcastle, 3 Sept. 1749, B.M. Add. MS. 32719, f. 52.

[5] Duke of Newcastle to Bp. Sherlock, 5 Sept. 1749, ibid., f. 105.

[6] Same to same, 9 Sept. 1749, ibid. 32720, f. 160.

The inertia of the Administration, and their determination *quieta non movere* defeated all attempts to secure an American episcopate.

It might have been expected that in connexion with his oversight of the Plantations, Gibson would have been spared the attacks of his enemies; but not even this branch of his activities escaped the rude satires of the pamphleteers. His concern for the spiritual welfare of the colonists was grossly misrepresented, as a cunning contrivance to get rid of unpleasant clergy at home by transporting them to America, and to exact a rich revenue of fines and mulcts by the exercise of ecclesiastical jurisdiction there.

> But I'll transport them for recruits
> Among the poor Plantation bruits,
> Who yet, I fear, will not receive 'em
> Being not such dupes as to relieve 'em.
> Else what a glorious crop of fees
> Might spring from foreign diocese.
> Why should remotest nations want
> The pious fraud and solemn cant?
> The virtues of our Order claim
> The full éclaircissement of Fame.[1]

In a sermon preached in 1732 before the learned Society of Lincoln's Inn on the anniversary of the execution of Charles I, the preacher asked, 'supposing any clergyman were so extravagant and daring, and had so little regard to conscience and public tranquillity, as to attempt to establish an ecclesiastical tribunal in our Colonies abroad, to the terror and affliction of our brethren there, who were many of them first driven thither by the oppression and barbarity of such courts here, especially in Archbishop Laud's reign; would not such an attempt tend to a bold innovation, and discover a busy, arrogant and dangerous spirit in such a clergyman?'[2] Other attacks were made upon Gibson because he preached the virtue of Con-

[1] 'Dr. Codex's Fifth Pastoral', London, 1734, Bp. Gibson Pamphlets, xv. 16, Sion College Library.

[2] 'A Sermon preached before the learned Society of Lincoln's Inn on 30th January 1732', in *The Weekly Miscellany*, Saturday, 10th March 1733; Bp. Gibson Pamphlets, xviii. 22, Sion College.

firmation, yet neglected to make provision for the colonists to receive its graces. 'Can his lordship justify it to the myriads in our American Plantations', his enemies urged, 'if at least once in his life he doth not visit and disperse amongst them these spiritual gifts?'[1] In the furious outcry which was raised against Church Power, the legality of his jurisdiction in the Colonies was closely scrutinized. From all sides the arrows of his adversaries were directed against him. In reply, *The Weekly Miscellany*, whose columns were always open to defenders of his cause, published a full account of his procedure in securing a Commission under the Broad Seal to exercise ecclesiastical jurisdiction in the Plantations. It demonstrated that he had acted in all respects with perfect legality, whereas his predecessors had committed acts of doubtful authority, and rebutted conclusively the charge of his having attempted to establish a jurisdiction over the morals of the laity.[2] Gibson himself, in face of the storm which raged about his head, acknowledged that, 'considering the advantages which might have been taken against him, if he had acted without the authority of the King, he had reason to esteem it a happy Providence over him, that he used that caution, and did not suffer himself to be led by precedents, without and against Law'.[3]

The care of the Plantations, which had cost so much trouble to procure, brought to him nothing beyond labour and expense. Despite the failure of so many of his cherished projects, he did his best for the churches under his charge.

'Beginning with a consciousness that he had a binding duty to perform towards his charges across the sea, he took pains to find out all that was possible concerning their condition; endeavoured

[1] 'High-Flown Episcopal and Priestly claims examin'd', London, 1737. R. Hett, Gibson Pamphlets, 45, B. 16, No. 4. The difficulty of Confirmation was very real. In regard to 'the exhortation after baptism to the Godfathers to bring the child to the bishop to be confirmed', some of the missionaries 'wholly omitted this exhortation because it was impracticable'. Others inserted the words 'if there be opportunity'. Dr. S. Johnson to Gibson, 4 June 1731, Fulham MSS., Box, Connecticut.

[2] *The Weekly Miscellany*, Saturday, 10th March 1733.

[3] Gibson, 'Doubts concerning the Abp.'s late letter', MSS. St. Paul's Cathedral, 17, B. 15.

to have his authority set upon a secure footing; and then, having formulated rules for the action of his representatives, he faithfully did his duty in each particular case as it arose. His ideal was to carry on the organization of the Colonial Churches under his charge, to check disorder and strife, and to supply the people with earnest and worthy ministers. In the midst of all his activity, he seems to have been guided by purely spiritual considerations.'[1]

[1] Cross, *The Anglican Episcopate and the American Colonies*, p. 87.

XI

LAST YEARS

THE qualities which recommended Potter to the Ministry for promotion to Canterbury were hardly such as to give promise of a conspicuously brilliant Primacy. After the fall of Gibson, Lord Hervey had impressed upon Walpole that 'he had had enough of great geniuses', and had advised him 'to take some Greek and Hebrew blockhead, that had learning enough to justify the preferment and not sense enough to make him repent of it'. His own candidate for the position was Potter, whom he apparently believed to possess the desired qualifications and limitations, since he described him as both 'a man of undoubted learning and as little doubted probity', and yet one whose 'capacity was not so good nor his temper so bad as to make Walpole apprehend any great danger from his being there'.[1] By talking constantly to the Queen in this strain and winning her over to his opinion, Hervey succeeded, when the expected vacancy occurred, in persuading the Prime Minister to carry out his suggestion. Accordingly, in 1737 Potter left Oxford for Lambeth. He had little prospect of cutting a good figure there. His predecessor had been incapacitated from the discharge of business for so many years that almost all the duties of the Primacy had fallen on Bishop Gibson, who, though temporarily under a cloud, might be restored to favour as suddenly as he had been cast down, in which case the new Archbishop could expect to fare little better than the old. Meanwhile Potter had to grapple with the problems of his new situation without the counsel and advice of the Bishop of London, who had taken a resolute decision 'not to be seen in public business of any kind, but industriously to avoid it and all appearances of concern in it'.[2] Not only would he no longer advise with the Ministry concerning promotions, nor discuss with them the programme of a coming

[1] Hervey, *Memoirs of the Reign of George II*, vol. ii, p. 108.
[2] Gibson to Hare, n.d., Gibson MSS. iii. 75.

parliamentary session, but he had determined to cease his regular personal attendance in the House of Lords, and instead to lodge his proxy with one of his brethren.[1] He intended to devote himself to the affairs of his diocese and of the Plantations, and expressed repeatedly to his friends his 'inward satisfaction that after a life of labour and difficulty, so great a share of ease and quiet was the portion of his old age'.[2] His resolution to withdraw from public business was evidently fixed. The necessary duties of his diocese and the claims of the colonies formed sufficient employment for any one man, and after the arduous years which he had spent in the service of the Church, it was fitting that he should enjoy a period of comparative recreation and quietude. Moreover, he was beginning to feel the burden of age, his health was gradually declining, and within a few years of his retirement a succession of family bereavements bore heavily upon him.

Little mention has been made hitherto of his domestic life, nor is there much evidence from which to construct an account. Apart from the notices of the births and deaths of his children, there are not more than half a dozen references to his family in his extant correspondence. He was the father of a family of eleven (seven sons and four daughters), of whom six survived him. Two of his children, Edmund and Margaret, died in infancy. John, his eldest son, Fellow of Clare Hall, Cambridge, and Rector of Kirby in Le Soken, died in 1731; Thomas, his second son, a clerk of the Treasury, died in 1742, at the early age of 33; Edmund, his third son, also a Fellow of Clare Hall, passed through a succession of minor ecclesiastical preferments, and, living until 1771, was of great assistance to his father in his later years, as was also William, a younger son, who likewise held several minor preferments, culminating in a Canonry of Windsor and the Archdeaconry of Essex (1746). He died in 1752. Robert, the youngest son, held various unimportant benefices, and died in 1791. From George, his fifth son, the Bishop derived most assistance in the business

[1] Gibson to the Duke of Newcastle, 19 May 1738, B.M. Add. MS. 32691, f. 141.

[2] Same to same, 3 Sept. 1739, ibid. 32692, f. 268.

of his office. Being appointed by his father to the stewardship of the manors of the Bishop of London, it fell to his lot to discharge all the administrative affairs concerning the temporalities of the see, and finally to act as his father's executor. Of the Bishop's daughters, Elizabeth, the eldest, married Dr. Robert Tyrwhitt, Canon of Windsor, whom she survived, herself dying in 1748. Jane, her younger sister, married George Scott, LL.D., of Wolverton Manor, Chigwell, Essex, who brought out the fourth edition of Gibson's *Camden* in 1772. Anne, the youngest daughter, married Dr. Christopher Wilson, son of Richard Wilson, Recorder of Leeds; he subsequently became Bishop of Bristol.[1]

In his seventy-second year the aged Prelate suffered three heavy bereavements. His wife died suddenly at Whitehall on the 27th December 1741, his second son, Thomas, died of small-pox in the following April, and in June his son-in-law, Dr. Tyrwhitt, died, leaving a disconsolate widow and seven young children. Gibson unquestionably felt the weight of these blows, and appeared in public very little during the whole of that year. On the 27th December 1742 he wrote a letter of apology to the King for his non-appearance at Court on His Majesty's birthday, urging that 'besides a year of three mournings, he had then been recovered of a long fitt of the gout, which followed him so fast that a new fitt returned on Friday last, so that it was with great difficulty that he was able to go through the duty at St. James' on Christmas Day as Dean of the Chapel'.[2]

Despite the growing infirmities of age, the burden of domestic griefs, and the heavy duties of his diocese, Gibson found it impossible to keep aloof from public business. After his quarrel with Walpole, Bishop Hare had predicted that 'a Bishop of London could not be an unconcerned spectator in things in which the interest of the Church was nearly concerned, and a Bishop of his lordship's experience and abilities could not fail always to have great weight with those of his order'.[3]

[1] Pedigree of Gibson of Bampton, by Charles Dalton, F.R.G.S.

[2] Gibson to the Duke of Newcastle, 27 Dec. 1742, B.M. Add. MS. 32699. f. 592.

[3] Bp. Hare to Bp. Gibson, 12 Aug. 1736, Gibson MSS. iii. 74.

His position as Dean of the Chapels Royal, and his duty of recommending preachers at Whitehall, kept him in frequent communication with the Court, and when the King's humour changed and he began to quarrel with Potter, Gibson found himself drawn again into the current of ecclesiastical politics. So early as 1738, His Majesty sent a gracious message 'to express to his lordship the sense which His Majesty had of his zeal for his service',[1] and it soon became apparent that the new Archbishop was unequal to his position. Sherlock said of him that his policy was 'to go on with everything as he had found it, et non movere quieta', except that he clung to his powers of preferment with jealous solicitude.[2] The irascible Sovereign affronted him, calling him 'Proud Priest' and other hard words.[3] Towards the end of his Primacy, this 'poor-spirited old man of Lambeth'[4] had to submit to the indignity of being twice refused an audience by the King, and was then abused by him as 'a man of a little dirty heart'.

In these circumstances Gibson, despite his resolution to forswear all public business, was forced to take up a more prominent position. The national crisis of 1743, when England became involved in the War of the Austrian Succession, rekindled his old enthusiasm and zeal, and brought him into close relations with the Ministry again. When it became known that the French were gathering transports in preparation for a descent upon England, Gibson chafed greatly under the inactivity of Potter. He wrote to the Duke of Newcastle to ask his advice, declaring that he was 'in some difficulty how to behave in his station at the present juncture. On the one hand he could never be wanting in any instance of duty to the King, and on the other he knew not what step it was proper for him to take'.[5] The Duke suggested that 'it would be very proper for the clergy of London to address the King',[6]

[1] Duke of Newcastle to Bp. Gibson, 17 July 1738, B.M. Add. MS. 32691, f. 252.
[2] Sherlock to the Duke of Newcastle, 9 Sept. 1743, ibid. 32701, f. 94.
[3] R. Venn to Dr. Z. Grey, B.M. Cole MSS. 5831, f. 181.
[4] Pyle, *Memoirs of a Royal Chaplain*, ed. Hartshorne, p. 126.
[5] Gibson to the Duke of Newcastle, 19 Feb. 1743/4, B.M. Add. MS. 32702, f. 70.
[6] Duke of Newcastle to Gibson, 21 Feb., ibid., f. 74.

but the Bishop still hesitated to act without a lead from his ecclesiastical superiors, of whose inactivity he was exceedingly critical. 'Surely', he wrote again to the Duke, 'it will appear strange in the eyes of the world that an attempt should be made against a Protestant Government, and in consequence against the Protestant Religion, and the bishops and clergy sit still as persons unconcerned'. Yet the rest of the Bench were bound to wait to see 'what the Metropolitan should think proper to be done', which he himself 'had no opportunity to know, having had no conversation with him for many years past about any affairs of a public nature'.[1] The advice of the Duke was still the same, and as the suggestion of an Address of the London clergy seemed 'liable to no objection from any quarter', a meeting was held at Sion College on the 27th February 1743/4 under the presidency of the Bishop, at which the proposal was agreed to. The matter was pressed forward with all speed, because the promoters were 'apprehensive that the Dissenters might get the start of them'.[2] An official document was drawn up, full of the most cordial expressions of loyalty, and of assurances that the signatories would not fail 'to enforce upon the people committed to their care the obligations they were under to preserve an inviolable fidelity to His Majesty', and to preach against Popery and the tyranny of a Popish prince: and this the King was graciously pleased to receive. The expected invasion did not occur, for the fleet of transports was wrecked by a storm, and when, in 1745, the Young Pretender set out upon his adventurous expedition, he had nothing to rely upon save the charm of his personality and the enthusiasm of a few British Legitimists. The outbreak of his insurrection involved a repetition of the tedious process of presenting addresses; and the attitude of the Archbishop being again unsatisfactory, the Bishop of London had to take an independent line.

The political situation at this time was certainly critical; there was a widespread feeling of discontent in the country,

[1] Gibson to the Duke of Newcastle, 24 Feb. 1743/4, B.M. Add. MS. 32702, f. 85.

[2] Same to same, 27 Feb. 1743/4. A copy of the address is attached to the letter. S. P. Dom. Geo. II, B. 63.

as a result of the heavy taxation and the demands of the war; the Whig Ministry was not popular, and there still remained a good deal of half-unconscious attachment to the Stuart House, which might become very dangerous at a critical moment. Despite the apparent hopelessness of the Pretender's enterprise, and his complete lack of military equipment and trained forces, he was able to make his way as far south as the Midlands, a feat which struck terror into the hearts of the Ministers in London. In view of the dangerous possibilities of the situation, the attitude of the Church was of vital importance. The influence of the clergy was indisputable, and their indifference might be almost as harmful as open hostility. A vigorous and enthusiastic demonstration of loyalty was looked for, but instead of taking action, the Primate was hesitating, and effecting nothing. The Duke of Newcastle himself suggested to Gibson that some public expression of the loyalty of the Church should be organized, and the Bishop replied that for his own part he was 'ready, in his station, to take any steps and pursue any measures, that should be judged of service to the common cause', but he could not point the way to his superiors.[1] Accordingly the Duke communicated with the Archbishop, who issued a letter to the Bishops of his Province on the 7th September, in which he desired them, in very general terms, 'to enjoin all the clergy on that important occasion, agreeably to their duty, to employ their utmost endeavours that the people under their respective charges might exert a becoming zeal for the preservation of the present happy constitution in Church and State'.[2]

Gibson, who was in constant communication with the Duke of Newcastle, was dissatisfied with this letter, as not coming up 'to what was designed, particularly on the heads of preaching against Popery, and diocesan addresses'. The majority of the Bishops, not being in London, 'would not be able to gather, from these general expressions, what it was in particular

[1] Same to same, 4 and 6 Sept. 1745, S. P. Dom. Geo. II, B. 67. Between the 4th and 28th September Gibson wrote no fewer than eleven letters to the Duke of Newcastle.

[2] Abp. Potter to the Duke of Newcastle, enclosing a copy of his letter, 7 Sept., ibid., B. 67.

that was expected of them'. For his own part he had determined to send a clear and vigorous letter to his own clergy, having been convinced by the arguments of the Duke's last letter, and resolved to risk the chance that 'the Archbishop might think him impertinent in meddling with his business'.[1] Accordingly he sent to the Prime Minister a draft of the proposed letter with the request for criticism and amendment.[2] The Duke approved it, and replied suggesting that the Bishop 'would allow it to be made as public as possible'; but Gibson felt he could not circulate it beyond his own diocese 'for fear of offence to a Superior in the Church'. Instead he sent several copies to the Duke and his brother, so that they might cause it 'to steal into the public papers', without attaching to himself the suspicion of desiring to direct 'his brother suffragans as to their conduct on this occasion'.[3]

The letter was certainly vigorous and emphatic. Reviewing first the present situation and explaining the real motives and origins of the rebellion, Gibson directed his clergy to remember that 'if any order of men were more nearly concerned than any other, it was theirs, who, under their gracious Sovereign, by their office and function were the more immediate guardians of our holy religion, and particularly against the manifold corruptions of Christianity which a Popish Government would unavoidably introduce'; therefore he gave them three specific directions as to their behaviour in the crisis; to pray regularly and publicly for the defeat of the conspiracy; 'to raise in their people a just abhorrence of Popery by setting themselves . . . to show in their public discourses from the pulpit, the grossness of the manifold errors and innovations of the Church of Rome'; and to combat the falsehood that a Popish prince would tolerate the Protestant religion, by the easy and effectual way of recounting 'the state of things in the short reign of James II'.[4] Compared with the brief and vague instructions which the Primate gave to the clergy of his own

[1] Gibson to the Duke of Newcastle, 7 Sept. 1745, S. P. Dom. Geo. II, B. 67.
[2] Same to same, 8 Sept., ibid.
[3] Same to same, 9 Sept., ibid.
[4] Gibson's Letter to the Clergy of his Diocese, 7 Sept. ibid.

diocese, Gibson's letter was the more striking and emphatic, and there can be little surprise that the attitude of Potter was deemed unsatisfactory.[1] In addition Gibson took especial care to dispatch a copy of his letter ' to every incumbent in the Cities of London and Westminster, and also to every incumbent in the county of Middlesex, and to every market town in the other parts of his diocese '.[2]

There remained the question of diocesan addresses, which the Duke of Newcastle and the Lord Chancellor had definitely suggested to the Archbishop, and in which therefore Gibson would not move until ' his Metropolitan shewed him the way '. Herein also Potter was strangely dilatory, displaying great diffidence in setting the matter on foot. He observed that in 1715 the declaration ' was signed only by a few of the bishops, others of them refusing, and in relation to the rest of the clergy scarce anything . . . was done ', but expressed the pious hope that as ' the method now taken up was far more general, so he hoped, it would be more effectual '.[3] It was certainly taken up with vigour and determination by Gibson, who carried the London ministers with him ' with great readiness and unanimity ', and dispatched copies of the address to various parts of his diocese ' in order to have the hands of the country clergy as well as the city, and to make it truly and in reality a diocesan address '.[4] His example was followed in the other dioceses, and addresses demonstrating the dutiful loyalty of the Church poured in upon His Majesty. The leading dignitaries did their best to help the Government. ' Have you associated and subscribed and been abused for doing so, like most of your cloth ? ' wrote Pyle to Kerrich ; ' do you preach stoutly against Popery as is the way now everywhere ? '[5] In the Northern Province Archbishop Herring's influence was a powerful factor

[1] Abp. Potter's Letter (9 Sept. 1745) exhorted his clergy ' agreeably to their known duty, by their example, by their exhortations, as well private as public, and by all other means in their power, to excite the people under their care to exert, on this important occasion, their utmost zeal for the preservation of our happy constitution in Church and State '. S. P. Dom. Geo. II, B. 67.

[2] Gibson to the Duke of Newcastle, 12 Sept. 1745, ibid.

[3] Potter to the Duke of Newcastle, 16 Sept. 1745, ibid., B. 68.

[4] Gibson to the Duke of Newcastle, 19 Sept. 1745, ibid.

[5] Pyle, *Memoirs of a Royal Chaplain*, p. 108.

on the side of the Administration, and Dr. Waugh at Carlisle rendered very useful service.

Bishop Gibson could not do much in a military capacity; but he was none the less militant in spirit, and on occasion inconveniently so. He sent reports to the Ministry of suspicious activities on the part of Papists in London, and hinted at various sinister designs wh ch were presumably being encouraged by the French. As the rebellion progressed, and the young Pretender advanced into England, Gibson became increasingly impressed with the need of a day of national humiliation and fasting to implore the Divine Aid. Whilst Ministers were at their wits' end to discover a means of turning back the rebels, he was protesting vigorously against the toleration of Sunday racing in the capital, and demanding instant measures to put a stop to such profanations.[1] But 'the heads and hands of our great men were very full at that juncture' and his protests were not regarded. The story of the collapse of the insurrection and the subsequent pacification of the kingdom, however, does not belong to the narrative of Gibson's activities.

The part which Gibson had played in this crisis established his claim to the Primacy more firmly than hitherto. Even before this troubled period, the question had been canvassed, and his friends had been eager that he should be a competitor. On the 24th January 1743/4 he wrote to the Duke of Newcastle, his sponsor, that it could not be expected that Lord Carteret would find him 'the person for his turn', and that there were many reasons against his becoming a candidate. First, he was 'gone further in life by many years than any archbishop in his memory was, at the time of his being made so'; secondly, for some years he had 'completely sequestered himself from public affairs of all kinds'; and thirdly, 'when he had a concern in public business, he was not over-complying and manageable'. Therefore he felt that 'it was by no means advisable so much as to mention his name' in this connexion. 'The being engaged in anything that did but look like a competition was what he would avoid above all things, as it must

[1] Gibson to the Duke of Newcastle, 13, 17, and 23 Jan. 1745/6, S. P. Dom. Geo. II, B. 80.

be construed a desire on his part to be exalted to that high station, and in case of a miscarriage, would leave him under the mark of a disappointed man.' Also 'it would be a most unreasonable part in him to engage his friends in a struggle on his behalf, under an uncertainty whether he would accept or not, in case they succeeded'; for he confessed that 'if he ever had an appetite to such high stations, age and experience had cured it'.[1] Nevertheless, in consequence of his renewed activities his name and reputation continued to rise. In 1746 the King received him graciously, and expressed his satisfaction with his behaviour 'on the late critical occasion'.[2] The Bishop requested a Canonry of Windsor for his son William, and a Prebend of Westminster for his son-in-law, Mr. Wilson, so that he might have the latter 'at hand, to assist him on all occasions in the affairs of his diocese'; both these favours were granted.[3] In 1747 he successively supported the claims of Dr. Waugh to the see of Carlisle in consequence of his services in the rebellion, and spoke of himself as 'a candidate for favour on his own account'.[4] His expectations were realized when, on the death of Potter in 1747, he received the offer of the dignity which had been denied him ten years earlier. It was a tardy recognition of his abilities, and of the services he had rendered to the Church. But it came too late. It is probable that the honour would have been declined in 1737; there could be no doubt that it would be refused now. Gibson had the gratification of saying *Nolo archiepiscopari*. He wrote to His Majesty that 'old age and growing infirmities would not allow him to think of entering upon a new scene of life, which was necessarily attended with such a variety of business and required such constant application'.[5] The offer was then made to Sherlock, to whom Gibson promised his assistance and advice towards rendering 'that high station easy and agreeable to him'.[6] But Sherlock also declined,

[1] Same to same, 24 Jan. 1743/4, B.M. Add. MS. 32702, f. 25.
[2] Same to same, 7 Aug. 1746, ibid. 32708, f. 29.
[3] Same to same, ibid., 32711, f. 609.
[4] Same to same, 2–3 July 1747, ibid. 32712, f. 16.
[5] Gibson to George II, 12 Oct. 1747, B.M. Add. MS. 32713, f. 243.
[6] Duke of Newcastle to Bp. Sherlock, 12 Oct. 1747, S. P. Dom. Geo. II, B. 102.

thus enjoying the rare distinction of having refused both archbishoprics, and Herring was translated from York to Canterbury.

It was a striking tribute to Gibson's intellectual vigour that the offer of the archbishopric should be made to him in his seventy-eighth year, when his physical constitution was visibly dissolving. For some time his infirmities had been increasing. In 1746 he had been carried into the King's closet to be received at His Majesty's audience. In the same year he had to relinquish the work of Visitation and Confirmation, postponing it until the next spring 'when the bishops would be in Town',[1] and when the Bishop of Gloucester did in fact undertake his Confirmations.[2] In 1747 he wrote to the Duke of Newcastle that 'walking had been his constant exercise in the whole course of his life, and it was that which, under God, had been the chief means of preserving him to his seventy-eighth year with a good share of health and strength', but that now he could not get abroad at all, and therefore requested permission to ride in his coach through St. James' Park in order to take a little air and exercise.[3] Early in 1748 his gout became so bad that he had to provide rails in his own house 'on both hands to enable him to go up and down stairs'.[4] Yet it was to one who could not 'go up and down a pair of stairs without hazard', and was almost completely confined within doors that the Primacy had been offered, because of his great influence and authority in the Church. He survived sufficiently long to see Herring settled at Lambeth, and facilitated his entrance into the archiepiscopate 'by giving him all the assistance that was in his power'.[5] In May 1748 the Duke of Newcastle went abroad, and Gibson wrote to assure him of 'his hearty prayers and sincere wishes for a good voyage, and an uninterrupted state of health, and for success

[1] Gibson to P. Morant, 30 Aug. 1746, Correspondence of Dr. Philip Morant, B.M. Add. MS. 37221, f. 224.
[2] Same to same, 18 May 1747, ibid., f. 247.
[3] Gibson to the Duke of Newcastle, 12 Oct. 1747, B.M. Add. MS. 32713, f. 241.
[4] Same to same, 24 March 1747/8, ibid. 32714, f. 381.
[5] Same to same, 23 March 1747/8, S. P. Dom. Geo. II, B. 106.

in his unwearied labours and endeavours for the welfare and honour of his country '.[1] Before His Grace set foot on English soil again, ' his old friend, for whom he had so sincere an esteem ',[2] had died. On August 20th the Bishop set out for Bath, to seek ' relief under a weakness of stomach ', for which the waters there were ' generally said to be a specific '.[3] After a very short stay the end came. On the 6th September 1748 ' he departed this life with true Christian fortitude, an apparent sense of his approaching dissolution, and in perfect tranquillity of mind during the intervals of his last fatal illness '.[4] He was buried on September 17th in a vault, built during his lifetime for himself and his family, in Fulham churchyard, to which resting-place the remains of his wife had been removed in the previous month from the Bettesworth vault in the chancel of Lambeth Church. His grave is marked by the simple epitaph : [5]

Edmundus Gibson, D.D.
Londinensis Episcopus,
Obiit 6° Sept:
Anno Dom: 1748
Aetat 79.

[1] Same to same, 25 May 1748, B.M. Add. MS. 32715, f. 116.
[2] Duke of Newcastle to Bp. Sherlock, ibid., 32717, f. 109.
[3] Gibson to Dr. Philip Morant, 28 Aug. 1748 (Bath), Correspondence of Dr. Philip Morant, ibid. 37221, f. 259.
[4] *Some Account of the Rt. Rev. Dr. Edmund Gibson*, 1749, p. 20.
[5] For Note 5 see next page, 388.

Note 5, from p. 387.

There is a mural tablet erected to his memory in the church, bearing the following inscription:

To the memory of
That excellent Prelate
Doctor Edmund Gibson,
Lord Bishop of London
Dean of His Majesty's
Chapels Royal
And one of the Lords of
His Majesty's Most Honble Privy Council.

In him
This Church and Nation lost an Able and Real Friend
And
Christianity a Wise, Strenuous and Sincere Advocate.
His Lordship's Peculiar Care and Concern for the Constitution and Discipline of the
Church of England were eminently distinguished not only by his Invaluable
Collection of Her Laws, but by his prudent and steady Opposition to every Attack made upon Them
His Affection for the State and Loyalty to His Prince were founded on the best Principles
And therefore were upon all occasions Fix'd and Uniform, And his zeal
To establish the Truth and Spread the Influence of the Christian Religion
Display'd in That most Instructive Defence of It, His Pastoral Letters
Will ever remain as the Strongest Testimony of the Conviction of his own Mind, And
Of his Affectionate Attention to the most Important Interests of Mankind.

Thus Lived and Dy'd this Good Bishop
A Great and Candid Churchman
A Dutyfull and Loyal Subject
An Orthodox and Exemplary Christian.
Obiit Sept. 6th, 1748. Aetat 79.

EPILOGUE

Codex by some indeed is reckon'd
Imperious Hildebrand the Second.[1]

It is a noteworthy feature of contemporary authorities for the life of Gibson that they agree in representing him as a prelate of unusual influence and power. To his friends he was the Rock of the Church's defence, to his adversaries an upstart Protestant Pope. 'I hear your enemies say with the husbandmen in the parable, "Come, let us kill him and the inheritance is ours",'[2] wrote one of his clergy at the time of the struggle concerning the Mortmain and Quakers' Bills; and the quaint comparison illustrates the general opinion of his importance. A brief summary of his career, in conclusion, may help to estimate the value of his services to his own time, and to explain his comparative lack of influence on succeeding generations.

From the *angusta domi* of Knipe and the position of a poor serving-child at Oxford, Edmund Gibson passed through a series of promotions till he became the friend of kings and their ministers. Despite the essentially aristocratic constitution of English society in the eighteenth century, and the wide gulf between the higher and lower clergy, it was not unusual for a talented youth of humble parentage to rise to high office in the Church. Archbishop Sharp owed his advancement to the fortunate circumstance that he was tutor in the family of Sir Heneage Finch, who subsequently became Lord Chancellor, Bishop Hare to the accident of his having been tutor to Sir Robert Walpole at Cambridge; and Gibson himself secured his early preferment through the patronage of Archbishop Tenison, and in his turn used the influence which came to him to promote the education, and secure the preferment, of Isaac Maddox, an orphan in a London Charity School, who became Bishop of St. Asaph in 1736.

[1] 'Dr. Codex's Fifth Pastoral', London, 1734, T. Cooper. Bp. Gibson Pamphlets, xv. 16, Sion College.

[2] The Vicar of Coggeshal to Bp. Gibson, 11 Oct. 1736, 'Salaries and Curates', vol. i. 'Coggeshall', St. Paul's Library (17, E. 24).

When Gibson entered the household of Archbishop Tenison he had already established a reputation for scholarship, and if he had not lived beyond the accession of George I, he would have been justly celebrated as a scholar of distinction and eminence.

The establishment of the Hanoverian dynasty changed the entire course of his career by opening out to him new possibilities of public service. He was immediately raised to the episcopate, and shortly after his translation to London he was drawn into the inner circle of ecclesiastical and political affairs. For twelve years he remained in intimate alliance with Walpole, during which period few promotions of importance were made without his active consent, and hardly one without his cognizance. In his case 'this transition from the one to the other was very natural. For it was well known that he had a very particular genius for the right management of business, which he happily transacted by means of a most exact method that he used on all occasions. This is a talent that rarely falls to the share of men of great learning, who are generally better suited to matters of a speculative than of a practical nature.'[1]

In his capacity as ecclesiastical adviser of the Ministry, Gibson rendered valuable service both to the Church and the State. By his reconciliation of the Church to the Hanoverian Succession he made a notable positive contribution to the security of the new dynasty, and checked the spread of a dangerous spirit of disaffection amongst the clergy. In carrying out his schemes he worked always to promote the welfare of the Church, and the alliance which he proposed with the Whig party in the State, was designed to set forward the interests of both. The possibility of the Church sinking to the level of a camp-follower of a political party was not realized until later, when the Duke of Newcastle was Prime Minister and Herring Archbishop of Canterbury.[2] The

[1] *Some account of the Rt. Rev. Dr. Edmund Gibson*, 1749, p. 16.

[2] 'The Minister himself is Fac Totum in ecclesiastic affairs', wrote Pyle to Kerrich in 1754, 'and a sweet manager he is; for what with the last election and his pitiful passion for the Chancellorship of Cambridge, he has involved himself in promises of Church preferment to the greatest degree of perplexity. . . . He torments the poor Archbishop of Canterbury for everything that falls in his gift, so that if a thing drops, he is forced to give it away the moment he is informed of it for fear of the Duke of Newcastle. He is

spectacle then afforded of the weakness of the episcopate before a rapacious politician sets off by contrast the strength of Gibson, whose various projects of reform were designed not only to win over the clergy, but also to reduce the possibilities of political corruption, by taking the power of conferring preferments out of the hands of time-serving Ministers.

It was Gibson's stiff, uncompromising attitude on the question of preferments, and the inability of the Whigs to accept his ecclesiastical pretensions, which caused the breakdown of the alliance between them. His policy was promising well 'till the Whigs began to make open attempts in Parliament against the Church and clergy. Then indeed the work grew heavy and lost ground, not through any neglect or change of conduct on the part of the bishops, but by the difficulty they found to satisfy the clergy that the Whigs meant no harm to them and the Church.' [1]

The reason for Gibson's comparative failure lay in the fact that he was opposed to the dominant tendencies of his time. In his crusade against the evils of his generation—its contempt for the sanctions of religion, its moral licence, and its violent anti-clerical prejudice—his political friends did not support him. The Whigs, so far from being converted to the position of Church defenders, were inclined rather to join in the attacks made upon it. Moreover, the system of ecclesiastical authority represented by High Church Laudianism had disappeared for ever. Gibson's schemes of 'Church Power', his demand for the restoration of the jurisdiction of Spiritual Courts and of their authority to correct vice and immorality, were out of relation to the thought and circumstances of the century. The problem of the suppression of vice was to be solved by the

as great a plague to the other bishops, asking even for their small livings. Ely gives him everything (they say by bargain), Chichester, Peterborough, Durham, Gloucester, Salisbury, &c., are slaves to him in this respect. Only London and Winchester give him flat denials, unless we are to add York, which is a point problematical. As to the Lord Chancellor, it is a kind of bargain made with everyone that enters upon that high office "that the Minister shall dispose of most of the Church preferments in his gift".' Pyle to Kerrich, 8 Oct. 1754, Pyle, *Memoirs of a Royal Chaplain* (ed. Hartshorne), p. 218.

[1] 'My Case in Relation to the Ministry and the Whigs', Gibson MSS. iv, 32.

extension of the responsibility of the State for the execution as well as for the framing of laws; the task could never be handed back to Churchmen.

Towards the movement for intellectual freedom characteristic of the century, Gibson was even more hostile. Despite his lip-service to its shibboleths—that Religion was founded on and provable by Reason—he could not tolerate the demand for free inquiry. He wished to meet the arguments of the Deists by imprisonment, and those of the Latitudinarians by suppression. By his indiscriminate opposition to everything associated with the Latitudinarian movement, he renounced the possibility of influencing permanently the destinies of the Church. Furthermore, his attitude towards Protestant Dissenters was marked by the same stiffness and suspicion.

The spirit of the age proved too strong for him. The Whigs revolted against the uncongenial exclusiveness of his ecclesiastical pretensions; the Rationalist thinkers swept away the artificial barriers which he erected for the defence of the Faith; a generation which was beginning to pay regard to the quiet voice of Reason, was not to be daunted by the stage thunder of ecclesiastical authority; and so the imperious Dr. Codex, who seemed to his contemporaries to possess a mysterious and potent influence, failed to impress his principles upon the Church of succeeding generations.

> He taught us little, but our soul
> Had felt him like the thunder's roll.

In his personal character, Gibson can command much of the admiration which may be withheld from him as an ecclesiastical statesman. Although his policy may have been mistaken, the fidelity and singleness of purpose with which he pursued it are certainly commendable. The duties which he undertook as a public service he discharged faithfully, despite the malicious attacks of his enemies, nor could he be accused of seeking his own profit or advancement. As a bishop he was diligent in the performance of his duty. Painstaking in the administration of his diocese, he was considerate and just in his relations with his clergy. In addition to the burdens of

the diocese of London, he undertook the oversight of the Plantations, and laboured earnestly, against perpetual disappointment and difficulty, to promote the welfare of those scattered churches.

Two features of Gibson's character stand out with especial prominence, his convinced political loyalty and his genuine respect for learning. From the time of taking his degree at Oxford he was known as a zealous Whig, and a strong supporter of the Protestant succession. Himself a scholar of great erudition, and well acquainted both with patristic literature and with post-Reformation English theology,[1] he was a patron of students and a benefactor of studies. After the lapse of a century and a half, one foundation still remains as a witness to these features of his character. By the establishment of the Regius Professorships of Modern History and Languages at Oxford and Cambridge, Gibson, like Dryden's Sagan of Jerusalem, directed sound learning into the channels of political loyalty.

> The Prophets' sons, by such example led,
> To learning and to loyalty were bred,
> For Colleges on bounteous kings depend,
> And never rebel was to arts a friend.

For the rest, his solid scholarship, his untiring industry, his practical sagacity, his sober piety, represent the best qualities of eighteenth-century churchmanship, just as his lack of originality, poetic feeling, and prophetic foresight are an equally accurate reflection of its defects. It was great natural ability combined with faithful diligence, not saintly heroism nor inspired genius, which raised him to eminence. 'Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings: he shall not stand before mean men.'

[1] Two of Gibson's commonplace books testify to his wide reading: the one, *Repertorium Religiosum Antiquum*, contains extracts from and notes on the works of Barnabas, Hermas, Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Justin Martyr, Tatian, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen, Cyprian, and Lactantius; the other, *Repertorium Religiosum Modernum*, contains similar references to the writings of Hooker, Taylor, Calamy, Pearson, Barrow, Sanderson, Lloyd, Tillotson, Sherlock, Potter, Locke, and Stillingfleet.

APPENDICES

A. *The Institution of Whitehall Preachers.*

1. Gibson's Scheme for the Institution of Whitehall Preachers.

B. *Promotions by Dioceses.*

1. Gibson's Scheme for Promotions by Dioceses.
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1. Bp. Gibson to Sir Robert Walpole . . . n.d.
2. Same to same . . . . . „
3. Same to same . . . . . „
4. Same to same . . . . . „
5. Mr. R. Venn, Rector of St. Antholin's, to Bp. Gibson „

F. *Selections from the Egmont MSS (Diary of Viscount Percival). Historical MSS. Commission.*

1. Gibson and Walpole. 2. Gibson and Dr. Rundle.

APPENDIX A

BISHOP GIBSON'S SCHEME FOR THE INSTITUTION OF WHITEHALL PREACHERS

Gibson MSS. iv. 34.

No. 1. *A Proposal.*

(1) For removing a complaint that so little notice is taken by ye Government of the King's Friends in ye two Universities: and at ye same time,

(2) For supplying a great defect in the Preaching Duty in His Majesty's Chapel at Whitehall.

I. *The Fact as to the Universities.*

Many persons of great worth and learning in the two Universities have openly and zealously adhered to ye King's interest, and thereby exposed themselves to much difficulty and uneasiness in those places. It is a great discouragement to them under those difficulties that no notice is taken of them by the Government, to whose protection they may well think themselves entitled.

If some notice was taken of them in a proper manner, it would animate and encourage the whole body of the King's friends in the two Universities; and would also induce several persons to appear openly in defence of ye Government, and who wish well to it but care not to put themselves in a state of persecution by being zealous for it, while they see those who have been so, wholly unregarded.

II. *The Fact as to the King's Chapel at Whitehall.*

There are six persons who preach there in their turns but have not one penny of salary for it, nor any consideration whatsoever. By this means the duty of preaching there must ordinarily be in mean hands; who also, having other cures of their own, and no reward for discharging this, will think themselves at liberty to be absent at pleasure, and to send any persons they can get to supply their turns here, without regarding what abilities they have or how they stand affected to ye Government. The honour of ye King is concerned, that Divine Service there be performed and supported in a laudable manner; this being one of His Majesty's Chapels and already upon the publick establishment, in all other respects except that of preaching.

The duty performed there is for the benefit and convenience of such as are employed in His Majesty's family and in other offices belonging to ye Crown; and of several persons of good quality, living within ye verge of ye Court; and all these together with others who find their convenience in repairing to this Chapel, would be much obliged and very thankful if ye preaching duty were put upon a better foot.

III. *The remedy of the two foregoing evils.*

Let twenty-four persons, being Fellows of Colleges in the two Universities, and the best scholars and best preachers that can be found among the King's friends there (that is to say twelve out of each University and two for each month) be appointed preachers at ye Chapel at Whitehall. Let a salary be settled of £20 for each man for his attendance: in all £480 per annum; or rather, if it might be, a salary of £30 to each (in all £720 per annum). £10 to defray ye charge of preparing for ye journey, and coming up and going down, and of living in London: and £20 as a clear honorary gratuity for doing the duty at Whitehall, and for the great service done to the King and his Government in ye University to which he belongs.

Let them continue in that office as long as they continue Fellows, or till they be made Chaplains to ye King and no longer; and as they die or leave their Fellowships or are made Chaplains at St. James', let other worthy men, of each University respectively and qualified as above, succeed them in the duty at Whitehall; and let it be understood from ye beginning that it is intended to be carried on so in perpetuity.

Advantages of such Establishment.

(1) A Salary bestowed for such a service will carry with it not only profit but honour, and will be more creditable and have better effects than a private pension in money.

(2) The King's Friends in ye two Universities will see themselves regarded by ye Court; and ye more directly and visibly as this Chapel has an immediate relation to ye Court.

(3) The brightest and most learned persons among them will be brought forth from time to time, into ye eye of ye world, and become known to ye Bishops and be better acquainted with them.

(4) Some of these preachers may be thought proper to be made Chaplains to the King: and when the station at Whitehall appears to be a step to that, it will make it a greater mark of favour, and also ye succession at Whitehall will be quicker. In this way a succession of able men and good preachers will be always growing up for ye high offices in ye Church.

(5) By being in London, during their month's attendance, they will see and hear many things which will enable them at their return to answer objections against ye Administration, and confute ye lies and misrepresentations of ye enemy upon their own knowledge and observation.

(6) In this way of encouragement there will be no colour to complain of inroads upon the rights or government of ye Universities, which is an objection that other ways which have been thought of, are liable to. Nor will there be any need of having recourse to Parliament to effect this.

APPENDIX B

No. 1. BISHOP GIBSON'S SCHEME OF PROMOTIONS

Gibson MSS. iv. 37 *b.*

Promotions by Dioceses.

Query. Considering the great number of ecclesiastical benefices which are in the gift of ye King, the Lord Chancellor and the Chancellor of the Duchy in all parts of England; how comes it to pass that in ye space of six and thirty years which have passed since the time of the Revolution, the clergy of England are not more attached to ye interest of ye Protestant succession and the Royal Family?

Answer. Because those promotions have not been so ordered and disposed of in such way as to create a general dependence, and raise a general expectation among ye clergy; but have been bestowed uncertainly and as it were, by chance, and been understood to fall only to ye share of the favourites of particular persons in Power and Office; and by consequence have had no influence, nor raised any expectation, excepting in such favourites only. From whence several evils have ensued:

(1) Such preferments have had little or no operation upon ye body of ye clergy towards influencing their behaviour and engaging them in ye interest of ye Government; there being so few of that body in comparison, who have thought themselves concerned or like to be regarded in ye disposal of them.

(2) Many modest and worthy clergymen who have been heartily in ye interest of ye Government and shown their affection to it on all occasions, have been wholly overlooked and disregarded, and have both been discouraged by such neglects from persevering in their zeal for ye Government and exposing themselves to ye hatred of the enemy, and have also been ye means of discouraging others by their example from engaging openly in ye same side.

(3) Whatever regard may have been had to affection to ye Government in ye disposal of these favours, very little has been had to ye degrees and proportions of figure and merit of persons so affected. On the contrary the thing considered has been ye merit of ye persons recommending and not ye merits of ye persons recommended, by which means the benefices have been oft times filled with persons of mean figure and character, and so a double offence has been given to the worthy part of the King's friends, who have not only been overlooked, but, which is worse, overlooked for ye sake of persons of much lower figure and character than themselves.

(4) Through the great regard which is had to the merits of the person recommending: the nobility and gentry have an opportunity to recommend persons upon private obligations and particular

views without a due regard to ye service of ye Government. And so long as it is understood that ye success rests chiefly upon ye credit and interest of ye recommender, the nobility and gentry will of course be frequently importuned to employ it in favour of such clergymen as are not personally known to them.

(5) By this means it is well known, that not a few of ye benefices of ye Crown have been obtained from time to time for persons who were enemies to ye Government or at best of doubtful affection to it; and who have afterwards discovered their disaffection in elections and on other occasions.

Remedy.

A Resolution to be taken and in a proper manner notified, that ye Parochial Livings in ye gift of the King, of the Lord Chancellor and of ye Chancellor of the Duchy, which are not given to Chaplains in Ordinary of ye King or to ye domestick chaplains of ye said Chancellors respectively, will be bestowed upon clergymen officiating at ye time when the vacancy happens, by virtue of institution or licence, within ye Diocese to which such benefice belongs; or to such persons in the two Universities as are natives of the Diocese and are in Holy Orders at ye time when ye vacancy happens.

Results.

(1) This will make ye body of ye clergy of every diocese esteem all benefices of ye forementioned patronage which are within their dioceses, to be in effect their own property; and every one who thinks his condition may be bettered by any particular vacancy or vacancies in view, will have his eye upon them and put himself in proper methods to obtain them; Whereas in ye present method of disposing of these favours, a benefice . . . raises no more expectation among ye clergy of ye diocese or even of the neighbourhood, where it lies, than if it were a hundred miles off and in any other diocese of England.

(2) The expectation being thus raised by vacancies in view, the clergy will take all proper methods to recommend themselves to such of ye nobility and gentry as are in ye interest of ye government, and are known to have credit above; and the Bishops of the several dioceses who are now for the most part in the interest of the Government, and who will be consulted of course concerning ye characters and behaviour of ye clergy who shall be candidates, will be much more regarded by their clergy and have a greater influence over them in all matters relating to ye service of ye Government. Especially ye young clergy, who either remain in ye Universities, or are come fresh from it to curacies, and have no preferment and who are now generally most noisy against ye Government, will then become expectants of favour from the Crown upon ye prospect of particular vacancies in their eye. And as ye

smaller benefices in ye gift of ye Seals are very numerous and dispersed all over the nation, and though small, are certain, and more desirable than curacies; this would undoubtedly create a great dependence upon ye Government as well among the younger clergy of every diocese, as among the natives thereof in ye two Universities. If it be said that care may be taken, without any such limitation to particular dioceses, to bestow ye promotions of ye Crown upon such persons only as are known to deserve well of ye Government, ye answer is; that it is not the bestowing the benefice when vacant from whence ye great benefit arises to ye Government, inasmuch as that is a favour only to one single person; . . . but it is from ye raising a fixed and certain expectation of something directly and immediately within their view, to which the clergy of that diocese are particularly entitled; and from the regard that is paid them by ye Crown in appropriating the favours to them in particular and securing them against the inroads of foreign competitors. In order to keep up the expectations it seems to be a good rule, not to promise any benefice before it comes actually vacant.

No Alteration of Rights of Crown.

This makes not ye least alteration in ye Rights of Patronage belonging to ye King or either of the Chancellors, but only puts it in such a method as seems to be far more for ye service of ye Crown. The King, notwithstanding this, will have the dignities of all kinds that are in the gift of the Crown to dispose of to his own Chaplains and other clergy of superior merit, in any part of ye nations, and ye Lord Chancellor will have ye Prebends of ye four Churches, viz. Norwich, Rochester, Gloucester and Bristol to bestow in ye utmost latitude; besides ye provision for his own chaplains.

And if this proposal should be thought a restraint on ye King's Ministers or the two Chancellors, this will be no objection with them, if it appear manifestly that the method proposed will be an enlargement of the King's interest.

As to ye Bishops and their patronage; it were to be wished that as they are naturally obliged to have a particular regard to ye clergy of their own dioceses, they would voluntarily come under ye forementioned limitations in ye disposal of their benefices at least; which is in itself reasonable, and would in consequence create a dependence among ye clergy, and by that means enable ye Bishops to promote ye King's service to a far greater degree than is to be expected in the present promiscuous method of disposing of their favours.

No. 2. BISHOP GIBSON'S SCHEME OF PROMOTIONS

Gibson MSS. iv. 38.

The King's Order relating to Promotions.

'His Majesty being desirous that in the disposal of ecclesiastical promotions, a just regard should be had to the clergy in all parts of the nation who are persons of good learning and sober conversation, and of known affection and zeal for his Government, and that the disposition of the benefices in the gift of the Crown should be put into such a method as may most effectually conduce to that end, hath been graciously pleased to declare; that henceforth when any benefice with cure of souls, which is in his own gift, shall become vacant, it shall be bestowed upon some clergyman qualified as above, who, at the time when such vacancy happens, shall be an incumbent or officiating curate duly licensed within the county or at least within the diocese to which that benefice belongs; or else to such person in the two Universities as is a native of such county or diocese, and shall be in Holy Orders at the time when the vacancy happens. And to the end that the foresaid rule may be punctually observed in the disposition of all benefices belonging to the Crown, His Majesty hath further ordered that entries thereof be made in the offices of his two principal Secretaries of State; and the Lord High Chancellor of Gt Britain upon His Majesty's recommendation is determined to observe the same rule in the disposal of such benefices with cure of souls, belonging to the Crown, the Patronage whereof appertains to His Lordship's Office.'

[This Order, dated 6th May 1724, was sent to every archbishop and bishop with an explanatory letter signed by Lord Townshend.]

APPENDIX C

SELECTIONS FROM THE CORRESPONDENCE OF BISHOP GIBSON WITH BISHOP HARE

Gibson MSS. iii. 70.

No. 1. Bp. Hare to Gibson, 2 August 1736.

[Hare discusses the unhappy sequence of events in the affair of the Quakers' Bill, and regrets the breach between Gibson and Walpole.]

'Your lordship has certainly great reason to complain of your usage the last winter, but so far as Sir Robert is concerned, you can't complain more than he does, though I have never heard him

speak of it in indecent language. I have heard him more than once say that never man was more cruelly used than he was by you, to break so abruptly with him after all ye intimacy there had been for so many years between you. . . . I must confess I was extremely sorry for ye step your lordship took in breaking so absolutely with him. I can't but think it was a hasty one; it was what . . . no one of your friends would have advised, and what would certainly have been prevented if your lordship had seen Sir Robert ye next day after I had acquainted you with ye offence I found was taken at our meetings,[1] as I hoped you would, and which I immediately acquainted you with as soon as I knew it, with that view, to prevent a misunderstanding as far as I could.'

> [He then proceeds to suggest that the affair of Rundle has been the cause of all subsequent troubles, and to express the opinion that the attempt to exclude from the Bench all whose orthodoxy is not entirely unblemished, cannot be successful.]

'Tis, I'm afraid in vain to hope to keep from ye Bench all who may be supposed not hearty friends to ye constitution; at least if into that number are to be reckoned all who are known or suspected to be in some points heterodox and freethinkers. The unhappy affair of Rundle has been ye true cause of all misunderstandings that have since followed; as I feared it would have very ill consequences, I most earnestly wished that that affair might have been accommodated. He was ye most obnoxious person of all one can foresee may be brought upon ye Bench, and what has past with respect to him, shews strongly how vain an attempt it will be to endeavour to exclude others, against whom there shall be no other objection but a want of orthodoxy in certain points.'

No. 2. Bp. Gibson to Bp. Hare, 4 August 1736.

Ibid. iii. 71.

> [Gibson first reviews the course of his relations with the Prime Minister.]

'It is true that I have always had civil treatment from Sir Robert Walpole, and it is as true that I have served him faithfully and without any further view for myself. . . . When promotions were vacant, and my opinion was asked, I gave it to him freely, and did not only consider the affection that ye persons were known to bear to ye Constitution of ye Church (which I thought myself obliged to attend to in ye first place), but also their affection to

[1] The reference is to the meetings of the Bishops with regard to the Quakers' Bill, at which it was decided to oppose the Government, the discussions being held and the decision reached without any communications between Gibson and the Prime Minister.

him and his Administration. These are rules which no Ministry can reasonably except against, and as to ye Court, when in any particular case they are inclined to do a thing which will be disagreeable to ye generality of ye clergy, they must be very weak if they do not give attention to those who warn them of it.'

[Passing to the question of his breach with the Ministry, Gibson maintains that it was inevitable and justifiable],

'unless it could be fairly said that Sir Robert had not ye chief part in those hard representations, by which I found myself lost in the opinion of the Court, and had no choice left, but whether I would walk out of the room of my own accord or be turned out. I chose the former and I think I chose right, considering myself as one who had determined to pursue the measures we were in—and no one deeper than our good brother of Oxford[1]—to defeat the Quakers' Bill.' . . .

[In a postscript he adds that he does not regret at all his vigorous and successful opposition to the proposal to elevate Rundle to the see of Gloucester.]

'Your lordship knows what my thoughts are of an heterodox and freethinking bishop, from my conduct in Rundle's affair; in whose power it was to have made things easy by a proper explanation; and I still think, as I did then, that no collateral motive ought to have made his way to any Bench, without such explanation, and that if he had been brought upon ye English Bench, I should have been well justifyed in quitting ye concern I then had in ye publick affairs of ye Church. As soon as we see one or two instances of such a promotion, people will quickly see which is ye surest way to ye Bench, and Freethinking will appear and triumph to a much greater degree than it has done hitherto. In all such cases ye sure rule is *Principiis obsta*: and it is now a great satisfaction to me that it has been my own rule in making a stand against heterodox promotions.'

No. 3. Bp. Hare to Bp. Gibson, 7 August 1736.

Ibid. iii. 72.

[Hare reaffirms his regret that Gibson's retirement involved a breach with the Ministry.]

'I think of your lordship in this case as I did of Lord Townshend; he had long served the Government and had by his services acquired a good right to withdraw from such a busy scene; but who did not wish it might have been done in another manner, without quarrel, resentment, or ill humour?'

[1] Bishop Potter of Oxford, raised to Canterbury in 1737, despite his share in the opposition to the Quakers' Bill.

[He then criticizes Gibson's attitude towards the Latitudinarians.]

'Your lordship's rule of *Principiis obsta* is certainly a very good one, but yet I can't but think 'tis not only prudent, but absolutely necessary in public Ministers, either in Church or State, to recede on some occasions, and make some concessions in compliance with ye times and circumstances of things; when one can't do what one could most wish and what is perfectly right, one must be content to choose the *minus malum*; and such it is to agree to such a promotion rather than draw down upon us the resentment of those who have it so much in their power to hurt us, and at ye same time are not unfriendly disposed towards us; and such a compliance is ye more necessary as we have so many declared enemies, who can't but rejoice in all opportunities that may tend to alienate our friends from us.'

[He urges that Walpole has all along intended to reward Gibson with the Archbishopric and has taken it for granted that the offer would be accepted.]

'There has been for many years a friendship, an intimacy, and a confidence such as no ecclesiastic has had with a Minister in my time, nor will any have again, nor hardly any other person with him; and this has been grounded not only on a long acquaintance but on a thorough esteem for you. I have heard both Sir Robert Walpole and Lord Townshend express this more than once in a very strong manner. If no personal favours were sent, it was, I suppose, because none were desired or wanted, though I believe Sir Robert himself sees this in another light, and thinks he has obliged you in many instances, not understanding ye word personal in ye confined sense. And even in that sense of the word, your lordship is sure he has long marked out your lordship for ye highest favour and honour ye King can bestow in ye Church. This has not only been designed, but for many years resolved on in ye fullest and most absolute manner, without so much as a thought of anybody else; nor had he till lately any apprehension y^{t} your lordship would decline it; nor indeed could any of your friends think so, when they saw you decline the offer of Durham and Winchester, which it is on any other supposition very hard to account for.'

[Therefore Walpole believes Gibson's action to have been premeditated, but concealed from him.]

'Sir Robert, upon reflecting upon what has passed, thinks he sees y^{t} you have for some time had a mind to break with ye Court and watched for a proper opportunity, and therefore laid hold on this. It is in this light he sees an action which was an extreme surprise to him at the time.'

[With regard to the Bishops' meetings about the Quakers' Bill, Hare argues that Gibson was the chief actor, so that if the Ministry was offended thereby, the chief blame must fall upon him.]

'But if this was a wrong step in ye Bishops, I think it must be allowed, your lordship was ye ringleader. Your station (in ye present circumstances of ye two Archbishops) and your constant vigilance for ye Church unavoidably made you so. And it was for that I came to ye meetings and concurred with my brethren in what was proposed; which I should never have done, had I suspected it would have given offence, which I had no apprehension it would, when ye mover was one in such credit with Sir Robert and whom I knew to be so well intentioned to him. If I had at all apprehended what followed, I should have proposed that ye Bishops would desire your lordship in their name to wait on Sir Robert and represent their sense of ye Quakers' Bill before we had taken any other step. . . . This step was taken without concert with ye Ministers and without asking their consent to it. Nay, Sir Robert apprehends you studiously concealed it from him, having seen him but ye day before ye first meeting.'

[The two ill consequences of the unhappy episode have been:]

'It has made the Ministry take fire, as if we had put ourselves in a state of defiance against them, on a supposition of their intending great mischief to the clergy, when in reality they intended none. It tempts the laity to try their strength with us, and make it a point that they may not seem to be defeated in anything they have a mind to, by ye power of ye ecclesiastics uniting openly and avowedly against them; but where that is the case they will always be too hard for us, if the Ministers are not with us.'

No. 4. Bp. Gibson to Bp. Hare, 10 August 1736.

Ibid. iii. 73.

[Bishop Gibson first refers to the expectation which was entertained of his accepting the Archbishopric.]

'For many years past he [Walpole] has had no ground to believe that I would undertake the charge, but ye quite contrary; . . . he may remember that when it has been occasionally mentioned as a thing fixed, my language has always been, that he must not take it for granted, and that he would do well to have in his own mind a scheme for Lambeth on supposition that London should not be vacant. . . . The coldness and indifference in that matter which I occasionally expressed was thought a *Nolo archiepiscopari*, and if I were so weak as to continue the same language in the present circumstances, otherwise than to your lordship on this occasion, the remark would naturally be, that ye grapes are soure.'

[He then discusses the comparison between his retirement and that of Lord Townshend.]

'The point between Lord Townshend and Sir Robert Walpole was a competition for power, and I never heard his Lordship complained of any misrepresentations made of him or his conduct. In his case the intimacy and confidence had been much greater than in mine, but it was to be wished in both that ye going off had been more quiet and easy; and I was so far from ye least desire or thought of breaking with ye Court, that I have always pleased myself with a time in view, when it would be in my power to go out without offence to ye Court and under a sense of their good will to me. I am sorry that has been disappointed by making hard representations. As to ye Ministry's being acquainted or not acquainted with our meetings and their liking or disliking them, I dare say it did not then enter into any man's thought; if it had, ye question might easily have been asked and as easily answered; but there was not a syllable said of it. . . . But if anything had been moved about ye Ministry, I should not have been the person who would have charged himself with a threatening message to them (for so it must have been interpreted). The truth is, ye Ministry had unwarily espoused ye Bill and ye Bishops did not think it consistent with their duty to sit still; but the first might have gone on to act according to their engagement and ye second according to their duty, and both might have mutually borne with each other, and no harm had been done, if ye cry of Sedition and being ye Ringleader of Sedition (both of these previous to my letter to Sir Robert Walpole) had not been raised. But when I found that cry raised and myself loaded with ye greatest part of ye supposed guilt, and ye Court and courtiers thoroughly incensed against me; surely it was natural to desire to get rid of such a situation, which had cost me so dear on y^t^ and many other occasions, and which I could not hope to preserve and maintain after such strong impressions had been made to my disadvantage.'

[Finally he reaffirms his conviction of the wisdom of the policy of making no concessions to heterodoxy.]

'When it is once found that such concessions will be made, the demands will multiply apace: on ye other hand, if it is found that ye concessions will not be made, ye demands will cease; or if they should go on and be carried by a higher hand, (as I think they will not) we shall at least know what bottom we are upon.'

APPENDIX D

BISHOP GIBSON AND SIR ROBERT WALPOLE

No. 1. MY CASE IN RELATION TO THE MINISTRY AND THE WHIGS.

Gibson MSS. iv. 32.

'Upon the death of the late Archbishop it quickly appeared that his successor did not intend to go on in the same path, but to strike out a new one of his own, and in order to that he fell into confidences with Bishop Smalbridge, etc., setting up for a better Churchman than his predecessor had been. This had two effects: the first, a coldness and distrust between him and ye Ministry; the second a no less coldness and distrust between His Grace and those Bishops and clergy who had acted under his predecessor upon a clear Whig bottom, and had not had any concern with ye Tory Bishops beyond common civility. Upon this the Ministry made choice of the Bishop of Norwich,[1] (a person much regarded and trusted by ye Lords Sunderland and Townshend) to be their adviser and assistant in Church matters. In the year 1723 I was made Bishop of London, and the Bishop of Norwich dying about four months after, and I upon good terms with ye Ministry, and now become ye first Bishop in station and always at hand, was considered as his successor and given to understand by letters from Hanover where ye King then was, that it was His Majesty's pleasure that it should be so.

'I wrote in ye most pressing manner, both to Lord Townshend and to Lord Carteret, that I might be excused from engaging in that station, on account of the variety of business which necessarily belonged to me as Bishop of London, and which of itself was full employment for one man. But both their answers were positive that I could not be excused.

'The declaration I made to them from ye beginning was, that if I engaged it must be upon a clear Church Whig bottom; the same that we had been upon in ye late Archbishop's time; as the true way to support the Protestant Succession and to maintain a good understanding between ye Church and ye Dissenters; we defending them in ye full enjoyment of their Toleration, and they thankful to us and content with the state of things as settled between ye Church and them at the Revolution.

'Agreeably to this declaration, the persons whom I recommended to ye favour of ye Court, were such, as besides their known affection to ye established Church, were also known to be well affected

[1] The designation is slightly inaccurate. Bishop Trimnell was translated from Norwich to Winchester in 1721. He was also Clerk of the Closet, and died 15th August 1723. In several other letters of Gibson he is mentioned as the Bishop of Winchester.

towards the Administration in ye State; and I should not have thought myself just to ye Ministry, who confided in me, if I had not considered the goodwill of ye persons to them and their Administration as well as other qualifications for the King's favour.

'By this rule (tho' freely censured by some Bishops, who have now ye credit, as too narrow) I proceeded steadily, not only in relation to ye candidates for ye King's favour, but also in ye disposal of my own promotions and of the places of preacher at Whitehall in the two Universities.

'My great point was, to bring ye body of ye clergy and ye two Universities, at least to be easy under a Whig Administration, and it is well known how great progress myself and other Bishops had made in it, and to what degree we succeeded, till ye Whigs began to make open attempts in Parliament against ye Church and clergy. Then indeed the work grew heavy, and lost ground, not thro' any neglect or change of conduct on ye part of ye Bishops, but by ye difficulty they found to satisfy ye clergy, that ye Whigs meant no harm to them and the Church. This has been my uniform policy, as founded upon ye settled principle of maintaining the Protestant Succession, and the Church Establishment, and the Toleration; which in my memory, were the distinguishing characters of a Whig for 30 years together. But if it grew into a received maxim, as ye nation gains ground apace, that the maintaining ye Protestant Succession and ye Toleration will not denominate one a good Whig, unless he will also sacrifice ye Church and clergy to their open and professed enemies, or at least be passive in their attempts against them: I and many others must renounce ye name.'

No. 2. 'QUERIES CONCERNING THE BISHOPS AND CLERGY'

Ibid. vii. 13.

1. Were not the Bishops in the reign of King William, and Queen Anne, when the Bench was divided, the favourites of the Lay Lords and Commons on each side, with whom they were respectively joined in measures in the State?

2. Has not a dislike of the Bench among the Lay Lords and Commons been growing by degrees, as the Bishops have been gradually growing up to an unanimity in the interest of the Court?

3. Is not this dislike chiefly owing to that unanimity; and if the Bench were divided as formerly, would they not be respected and supported as formerly?

4. Do not the difficulties brought upon the Bench of Bishops by their unanimity for the Court, entitle them strongly to the protection of the Court against any inconvenience or danger that such unanimity may expose them to?

5. Can any bishop, consistently with the duty he owes to his

station and character endeavour or wish, that the Bench may be preserved in its present state of unanimity without proper assurances on the part of the Court that they shall in all events be supported, and without actions suitable to such assurances, as there shall be opportunity and occasion?

6. Can the Bishops go on to support the Whig cause with such unanimity and zeal, and justify their so doing to themselves and the clergy, unless some restraint be laid upon the lay Whigs . . . from speaking of Churchmen and Church matters in the unfriendly and disrespectful manner that many of them are known to do?

7. Will not such freedom of speech concerning the Church and the bishops and clergy, when it is observed to come from those who are related to the Court, or have a dependence on it, spread a jealousy that the Court itself is not well affected to our Ecclesiastical Constitution?

8. Has not the Whig interest, as supported by a competent number of bishops and clergy been the united strength upon which the Protestant cause has rested and stood its ground ever since the Revolution; and can a Protestant Establishment subsist and be safe upon any other bottom?

9. Has not the great means of maintaining that union been, on the one hand, the steady adherence of the Whig bishops and clergy to the lay Whigs, notwithstanding the reproaches from the Tory clergy and laity; and on the other hand, a readiness on the part of the lay Whigs to act in such a manner, as shall leave the Tory clergy no reasonable ground to accuse the Whig bishops and clergy of joining in measures with the enemies of ye Church?

10. Can the union between the lay Whigs and the Whig bishops and clergy be maintained upon any other foot; and if the lay Whigs shall by their behaviour make the continuance of that union impracticable, can they stand as an interest by themselves, under a full charge by the whole body of bishops and clergy and the Universities (which, of course, will be ye case) of their being enemies to the Ecclesiastical Constitution; and if they cannot, will not this, of course, let in the whole body of the Tories?

11. Will the Court go on to treat the bishops and clergy and their concerns in that unfriendly way, if the King and Queen shall, in proper time, occasionally make it understood by those about them that they are satisfy'd they have no security for themselves and their family but the maintaining the Constitution in Church and State?

12. May it not be out of the power of the Court to check and oppose that spirit, if it be suffered to gain ground and to go on much longer without restraint of any kind; and in case it finally prevail can anything follow but a national confusion?

No. 3. 'AN ANSWER TO THE OBJECTION OF MY BREAKING ABRUPTLY WITH SIR R. WALPOLE'

Ibid. iii. 62.

'I had not the least thought of breaking with him when ye Quakers' Bill came into ye House of Commons. That Bill occasioned frequent meetings of ye Bishops in order to defeat it; which meetings were represented at Court and other places as irregular and seditious, and I as at the head of it and as drawing the other Bishops into the irregularity and sedition. I thought this a great hardship and represented my thoughts in a letter to Sir R. Walpole, as the person whom I took to be the chief author of it: who might have set all things right by declaring that he had no hand in it: but nothing like this was said by him or for him.

'I saw all this came upon me from the Whig quarters on account of the situation I was in with regard to ye Ministry; but thought it hard that the Ministry themselves should load me, and that I should be represented as ye person who drew in ye other Bishops, when it was well known that I had not ye least influence upon many of them. Under a sense of this hard usage and of its being brought upon me by my situation, I resolved to get out of it as well as I could, and wrote my mind upon that head fully and clearly to Sir R. Walpole, upon whom it was incumbent, if he found me under any mistake as to facts, to rectify it.

'It is therefore to be taken for granted that ye facts on which my complaint was grounded were true; and if so my resolution was right; and after I had taken it and also resolved to go on with ye Bishops in those measures which had laid me under ye displeasure of ye Court and Ministry, there was no room for more to be done on my part than to acquaint Sir R. Walpole by letter with my resolution and ye grounds of it, which I did. If any further step was to be taken to excuse or mitigate what had been said by ye Ministry at Court, or any reasons were to be given why the opposition to ye Bill, or at least our methods of opposing it, should be dropt, all this rested on Sir R. Walpole, unless it was a crime on my part not to submit quietly and implicitly to the pleasure and inclination of ye Ministry.'

No. 4. THE AFFAIR OF THE QUAKERS' BILL

Ibid. iii. 66.

1. The Ministry engage in the Quakers' Bill without consulting the Bishops, and then quarrel with the Bishops for not acting in concert with them.

2. The Ministry by engaging in favour of ye Bill, put ye Bishops under a necessity of doing what they did, and then represent it as sedition.

3. During these proceedings the Bishops were acquainted at one of their meetings with some expedients which ye Ministry had thought on for ye security of ye clergy. The answer of the Bishops by the Bishop of Salisbury, who delivered the message and took down the answer in writing, was in these words:

> 'It is the general sense that no assent can be given to any proposals till they are reduced to writing, with the clauses and provisions thereto relating.'

But we heard no more of them, and they went on in their own way.

4. The resolutions of the Bishops to acquaint their clergy with what was going on, and to advise them to represent their sense of it to their friends in Parliament and to petition to be heard by Counsel, passed with the greatest unanimity, as being indeed the only method they could take to put a stop to the Bill, and such as they conceived to be strictly regular and agreeable to constant practice where legal right and property is concerned.

And the same measures that were taken unanimously, were executed universally either by the post of that night or the following night's post.

5. It is true that after the Bishop of London found the Ministry engaged in favour of the Bill he had no communication with them: and his reason was this: The Bishops thought themselves bound to meet and consult about ye Bill and the proper methods of opposing it: in which ye Bishop of London heartily concurred. After those mutual consultations were opened, the Bishop resolved to embark wholly with his brethren, and not to give any ground to suspect his acting in any respect separately from them or his discovering what had passed among them. Nor did he think it advisable to put himself under the uneasy situation of being ground between the Ministry and the Bench.

6. Great exception has been taken at ye number of petitions, whereas the concern of ye clergy was equal in every diocese: and if only two or three neighbouring dioceses had petitioned, it would have been said that those petitions were artfully raised and that ye clergy in all other parts appeared to be easy. Nor could it be expected (on the one hand) that any bishop or his clergy should be content to appear more indifferent than their brethren, when it was evident that ye concern was general.

7. The merit which a certain great man had in throwing out ye Test Bill, has been made ye foundation of a charge of ingratitude upon ye Bench for opposing him in ye Quakers' Bill. To state this matter in a very few words: We will suppose that man had proposed to ye Bishops that the Test Bill should be thrown out, on condition they would be passive in ye Quakers' Bill; would any one Bishop have thought himself at liberty to come into such a composition, under a conviction that the passing of ye Quakers' Bill would be an injury to ye rights of his Clergy?

No. 5. GIBSON'S LAST LETTER TO WALPOLE AFTER THE AFFAIR OF THE QUAKERS' BILL

[n.d.] Ibid. iii. 61.

My last letter to Walpole.

Hon^{d} Sir,

The situation, which I have been in for some years past, has been often uneasy to me and attended with more difficulty and vexation than I could well bear. But, notwithstanding that, I resolved to go on, with an eye to a time in view, when it might probably be in my power (if it should also be in my inclination and the face of affairs should make it eligible) to go out quietly, without offence and without ruffle. But the state of things is now altered. I am not insensible to what degree my conduct has been condemned and resented, and what numbers there are who rejoice that they can give a late instance,[1] in proof of my being a weak, wilful and unpracticable man. . . . At the same time I comfort myself with having acted throughout in concurrence with my brethren . . . and so far am I from being in a disposition to seek a pardon for what is past, that if on any future occasion, I see an attack made upon the rights of the parochial clergy, in which the Court think fit to take a part, I shall think myself obliged to concur with such of my brethren as appear to be in the same sentiments with me, in warning my clergy and advising them to petition, that they may be heard before they are condemned. I foresee that as long as this anti-church spirit prevails, vexations of the like kind are to be expected from session to session; the largest share of which has hitherto fallen upon me, as one who has been supposed to have the largest share in Church matters. I therefore choose to purchase my future peace and quiet, or at least an abatement of trouble and vexation, by having it understood that I have no more share in the publick affairs of the Church than the rest of my brethren.[2] They have had the happiness to go on undisturbed and at ease, while I, in the course of many years, have been tossed about and insulted by people of almost all denominations, many of whom have been known to stand very well with ye Court.

I wish you well in your administration; and particularly that you may be able to replace the safety and security of the whole nation upon that firm foundation (the only foundation of peace and happiness to this country) the Protestant Succession, the Church Establishment, and the Toleration. This is a great work; and considering the strength to which the anti-church spirit is grown, I doubt it will not be in your power to effect it. I pray God it may.

[1] 'The part I had in the measures taken by ye Bishops to defeat the Quakers' Bill.'

[2] 'It will easily be seen by ye tenor of this letter, that when I wrote it, I had no thoughts of an Archbishopric.'

APPENDIX E

CORRESPONDENCE RELATING TO THE CASE OF DR. RUNDLE AND THE SEE OF GLOUCESTER

No. 1. Bp. Gibson to Sir Robert Walpole. [*n.d.*]

Gibson MSS. iii. 50.

Hon[d]. Sir,

I find myself under a very great difficulty in relation to the Bishopric of Gloucester, which I suppose the Court designs for Dr. Rundle. On the one hand, my own judgement and the regard I owe to my character and the general sense of the bishops and clergy, will not permit me to concur or acquiesce in it . . . at a time when the bishops have great reason to wish that no person may be brought among them, whose affection to the Constitution of ye Church is not clear and unsuspected. On the other hand, I foresee that if I openly declare against it . . . though with no probability of success, I shall greatly offend the Court and draw upon me the displeasure of the Lord Chancellor and all his friends.

In this perplexity, I see no refuge, but the withdrawing beforehand from all concern in Church matters, except those of my own diocese. And if you think that this savours of discontent, I beseech you to consider fairly and candidly what my condition is. I am, of course, on ill terms with the Tories, for acting constantly against them. I have lost the goodwill of many of the lay Whigs by opposing their designs against the Church and clergy; the Dissenters are angry with me for opposing their Test Bill. In these circumstances, my great consolation and refuge is the kindness and goodwill of the bishops and clergy, and I cannot, either in judgement or prudence, submit to anything which may endanger the loss of that.

The Bishops on account of their dutiful behaviour to the Court, might hope for some regard to their inclination and good liking, in the choice of every new member for ye Bench.

Nor can they think it quite decent to have their successor fixed and generally known whilst they are yet[1] alive. A certain Archbishop,[2] if I am rightly informed, feels this in a very sensible manner. Why cannot this affair of Gloucester sleep and be understood to remain in suspense until the poor Bishop is dead; by which time I may either have nothing to do, or at least, nothing to expect.

[1] 'This letter was written before ye late Bishop of Gloucester's death and before I knew anything of Mr. Venn's affairs.'

[2] 'The Bishop of Oxford was understood to have ye promise of the Archbishopric of York.'

No. 2. Bp. Gibson to Sir Robert Walpole. [*n.d.*]

Ibid. iii. 51.

Hon[d]. Sir,

I think it proper to acquaint you, if you are not already apprised of it, that the design of making Dr. Rundle Bishop of Gloucester has given very great offence to the clergy: and I may truly add that the uneasiness in general, among the Whig as well as Tory part of them. As to the Bishops, I do not wish that you should take their sentiments from me, but wish that you could take occasion to talk with as many of them as you think proper.

From the beginning of this affair, I have been very sensible how much more nearly it concerns me, than any other bishop, by reason of the share I have hitherto had in ecclesiastical affairs, and the discourse there has long been about a higher station.

In these circumstances, the charge of sacrificing the interests of Religion and the Established Church to my own private views, would be so just and obvious, if I should acquiesce and tamely go on with the Court after such a step on their part; that I cannot upon any consideration whatsoever, expose myself to so grievous a reproach and must therefore be obliged to withdraw from all ecclesiastical work, except that of my own diocese.

I am sincerely sorry . . . that I am driven to this resolution by a necessary regard to my own character.

No. 3. Bp. Gibson to Sir Robert Walpole. [*n.d.*]

Ibid. iii. 52.

Hon[d]. Sir,

Last night after I got home from Lambeth,[1] a clergyman of good note came to me, and told me that his coming was occasioned by a report they had in the City that Dr. Rundle was to be made Bishop of Gloster. He said that some years since he happened to be in a mixed company, where Dr. Rundle, with great gaiety and without any reserve, spoke slightingly of Revelation as an uncertain guide and openly ridiculed one point of great note and importance both in the Old and New Testaments. The clergyman added that . . . he thought he was bound in conscience to discover and make known what he then heard; and that he, together with another person, who was in the company, would, for the discharge of their consciences, appear publickly at the confirmation of Dr. Rundle and declare upon oath what they heard him say, in order to put a stop to it. This makes me feel more and more, how greatly it concerns me, not to be thought consenting to this promotion, but to have it understood that I truly and heartily did all I could to prevent it. And I am still of opinion that, as to

[1] 'On St. Stephen's Day.'

myself, the immediate withdrawing from all concern in Church matters, except those of my own diocese, would be a proper vindication. . . . I have my doubt whether such a sudden withdrawing at this critical[1] juncture, would not be made use of by the enemy to ill purposes, and improved by them to the prejudice of you and ye Administration, which would grieve me to the heart.

No. 4. Bp. Gibson to Sir Robert Walpole. [*n.d.*]

Ibid. iii. 53.

The affair of the Bishopric of Gloster has been suspended, first, till the Session was at an end, and then till ye elections were over. These objections against a declaration on the part of the Court are now removed, and though there will be difficulties whatever the final resolution may be, I do not see that they are like to be lessened by time. On the contrary, the scurrility and insolence with which that point is managed on one side, breeds more and more ill blood on the other, and will continue to do so as long as it remains undetermined.

On supposition that Dr. Rundle is to be the person, I take it for granted that my Lord Chancellor has made himself sure of a sufficient number of Bishops who will act in the Commission to Consecrate, and be ready to come to town upon the Archbishop's summons.

I need not tell you that it is far from being a point of indifference with me (and I may add with the body of Bishops and Clergy) which way the Court determines. But my meaning is, that if the Court suppose that it will become a point of greater indifference, the longer it is delayed, I think they will find themselves mistaken.

No. 5. Mr. R. Venn, Rector of St. Antholin's, to Bp. Gibson

Ibid. iii. 54.

27th December 1733.

My Lord,

There has been for some months a report spread about the town that Dr. Rundle would probably be promoted to a bishopric. The Bishop of Gloster's death has revived that discourse, which however groundless it may be, yet I cannot think any caution too great, that may prevent the bringing so notorious a disgrace on the Christian Church as the preferring a man of his character would certainly occasion. . . . [Mr. Venn then gave details of his objection which related to . . .,]

. . . A conversation with which Dr. Rundle was pleased to enter-

[1] 'Just before ye opening of the Session of Parliament.'

tain myself and some other persons, who were quite strangers to him, in a mixed company, after a most unreserved and indecent manner. Upon some discourse of the controversies then afoot, he took occasion to fall upon Abraham's offering up his son Isaac, as an action unjust and unnatural, that it was the remains of his idolatrous education, and proceeded from a vain affectation of exceeding other nations, that had indeed been guilty of human sacrifices, but had not yet carried the point so far, as with their own hands to attempt the slaying of an only child; that in order to justify and heighten his character in the esteem of his friends, he pretended a Revelation from God, commissioning him to enter upon this bloody affair.

The substance of this account I am ready to attest upon oath; and if this man be made a Bishop, am resolved to accuse him as soon as the citation shall be fixed upon the church, where he is to be confirmed. . . . There is another gentleman, who was present at that same conversation and shall be called to add his testimony.

APPENDIX F

EXTRACTS FROM THE EGMONT MSS.

(The Diary of Viscount Percival first Earl of Egmont.)
Historical MSS. Commission.

I. Gibson and Walpole.

a. *Character of Gibson given to Lord Percival by Mr. R. Venn, Rector of St. Antholin's.*

'The Bishop of London is ambitious and loves power, and has nineteen Bishops at command, who do everything he would have them, which will secure his being Archbishop of Canterbury, but at the same time, not willing to disoblige the Ministry he is not active to suppress Popery, nor to encourage men of learning and zeal for the Church, because they will not be tools.'

21st Nov. 1733. vol. i, p. 444.

b. *The Church-Whig Alliance.*

'I met Dr. Bundy who told me . . . that the Bishop of London had told Sir Robert Walpole if he thus abandoned the interest of the clergy and the Church to the rage of their enemies, he would no longer join him in any matter whatever. This he said on account of the Quakers' Bill and that of Mortmain which Sir Robert privately encourages, but might prevent if he pleased by his influence in both Houses. The Bishop added, that he had given the members so much length that he would find it too late to reclaim them when he should endeavour it, and that it was not serving the King or the cause of Monarchy, since the persons who so furiously drove on

these matters were not monarchical men, nor would stop here. That he was sensible some would say that by this frank declaration to him he must not expect to be made Archbishop of Canterbury, but this he cared not for; he might even take away his Bishopric of London if he pleased.'

22nd April 1736. vol. ii, p. 262.

c. 'I visited my old tutor, Dr. Smalbrook, Bishop of Lichfield, who is very angry at the ill-will now shewn against the clergy, and says the Bishops are resolved to oppose the Mortmain and Quakers' Bills. He does not understand the policy of Sir Robert Walpole in abandoning the clergy to their enemies, when the Church is the best support of the Crown, and the country clergy never better disposed to the Government, and he thinks it ungrateful in him to defend them so ill, who had broke with their Tory friends to serve him as well as the King. . . . He talked in a strain as if the Bishop of London and the other Bishops were resolved to break with Sir Robert on his abandoning them. I asked him where they would go, for if they broke with Sir Robert, they break with all the Government Whigs, and as to the discontented Whigs, they were the clergy's greatest enemies and the main promoters of the two Bills in question, but especially of the restraint put upon the Universities. There remained therefore only the Tories, who were full of resentment at their abandoning them, and at the present laughed at their distress and gave them but a small support in Parliament. He replied this was all true but somewhere they must go.'

2nd May 1736. vol. ii, p. 266.

d. *The Quakers' and Mortmain Bills in the House of Lords.*

'Very smart and offensively rude speeches were again uttered by the Duke of Argyle and his brother the Lord Islay against the clergy and particularly the Bishops, to which the Bishop of London said he would not return railing for railing, and whereas the Duke complained of the Codex of Ecclesiastical Laws published several years ago by the Bishop, as containing positions dangerous to the State, the Bishop said that as the Law now stands his book contained nothing but he could justify to be the ecclesiastical constitution.

Great offence was taken at the Bishops' sending circular letters to the country clergy to send up petitions against the Quakers' and Mortmain Bills, which the Duke of Argyle compared to a Colonel's writing to his regiment to petition the Parliament against breaking the Army, for which, he said, the Colonel would deserve to be hanged.'

6th May 1736. vol. ii, p. 271.

e. *The Quarrel of Gibson and Walpole.*

'Dr. Bundy came to see me. He told me he believed matters were not made up between Sir Robert Walpole and the Bishop of

London, who, asking the other day what the world said of him, was answered that the clergy were not to be attacked this next session, but he was to be rejected by the Court and made the scapegoat. To which he said he was very glad to be the scapegoat, provided the Ministry let him alone.'

23rd Dec. 1736. vol. ii, p. 322.

II. Gibson and Dr. Rundle.

a. *The Beginning of the Affair.*

'Upon the death of Dr. Sydall, Bishop of Gloucester, the Lord Chancellor, even before he had kissed hands, applied to her Majesty that Dr. Rundall might succeed him, which the Bishops of London, Chichester, and Bangor violently opposed and so continue to do, avouching that Dr. Rundall is not orthodox in the faith. . . . The Bishop of London . . . has been accused of being a Court Bishop in view of succeeding to Lambeth, but he will show the world on this occasion that he prefers the cause of Christianity to all worldly considerations, and if this man be forced upon the Church, he will retire to Fulham, and have no more to do in public matters.'

6th Feb. 1733–4. vol. ii, p. 23.

b. *The Opposition of Gibson.*

'In the evening I visited the Bishops of Rochester and Lichfield. They told me it will be decided in a week whether Dr. Rundall shall be a Bishop or no. The Court inclines for him, and the Chancellor persists to demand it, but the Bishop of London is peremptory against him and the rest of the Bishops, one or two excepted, adhere to him. He is a generous, charitable man, has learning and agreeable conversation, but has always passed for an Arian. The Bishop of London says if he will clear himself of that, he will have no objection to him; but he has not done it.'

11th Dec. 1734. vol. ii, p. 136.

c. *Criticism of Gibson's attitude.*

'Last Saturday Dr. Rundle kissed his Majesty's hand for the Bishopric of Ireland. . . . The town saith thereon that my Lord Chancellor has interest to make an Irish Bishop but not an English one, and that a person unfit to be a small Bishop in England is good enough for Ireland. That the Bishop of London would not suffer him to be an English Bishop because he could not subject him to his pleasure, but acquiesces in his being a Bishop in another country, so that whatever he pretends, it is not the unorthodoxy of the man that made him really his enemy, but his incompliableness. It is also said by some that the Bishop of London, who is very high in Church matters, had it in his view to get rid one day of the praemunire which is over the heads of Bishops in case they refuse to consecrate such Bishops as the King nominates, and so to take the nomination out of the Crown and restore it, as it was in the early

times, to the Bishops and clergy, and as he is well with the Court, thought no opportunity more proper than this by objecting to Dr. Rundle, who is suspected of heterodox opinions, and therefore that his desire was at the bottom that the Crown should have persisted in the first intention of making Dr. Rundle Bishop of Gloucester, after which he would have opposed his consecration and had a trial at law, wherein he would have ventured the consequences of a praemunire, if cast, depending on his power with his Majesty and the Ministry; and then if he succeeded in this instance, it would have been a rule to Bishops in the future to do the like whenever they had objections to persons nominated by the Crown, so that at last the clergy would recover their ancient rights. But by making this Doctor a Bishop in Ireland, against which he declares his dissent though he cannot help it, the view he had is lost, and all the satisfaction that remains to him is that a person whom he could not govern is not a member of the House of Lords in England.'

19th Feb. 1734–5. vol. ii, p. 171.

Only the last quotation calls for comment. It confuses the grounds of Gibson's opposition to Dr. Rundle, which were purely theological, as has been shown clearly on p. 265 seq. It should be noted also that Gibson did not approve of Rundle's nomination to the see of Derry. But the circumstance of the promotion to an Irish see of a person who could not obtain an English bishopric was not exceptional. Gibson had desired to prefer Berkeley to an English deanery or bishopric, in return for the failure of his college in the New World, but had failed to obtain anything, so that Berkeley had to be content with an Irish preferment. (Cf. Egmont MSS. i, 237–8.) The statement about Gibson's resolve to risk a praemunire in the case of Rundle is unsupported by any other evidence; also it rests upon a misunderstanding of the position. A praemunire was not incurred except when the Archbishopric of Canterbury was vacant, which was not the case in 1733–4. (See *supra*, p. 271.)

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